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THE PASSING OF THE MANCHUS



MR. YUAN SHIH K'AI, PROVISIONAL PRESIDENT, WITH HIS OFFICERS.

THE PASSING OF THE MANCHUS

BY

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1914

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS



"Thus has the Horologe of Time struck and an old Era passed away."
CARLYLE, *French Revolution.*

T T. v. 46

LONDON
EDWARD ARNOLD
1912

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PREFACE

IT is probable that some considerable time must elapse before it will be possible for a complete account to be written of the developments in the story of modern China which have resulted in the present situation. Nor is it to be supposed that the numerous complications of recent inside history can be fully elucidated within the limits of a single volume. It is hoped, however, that some value may attach to a plain record of events set down in the perspective in which they have appeared to the present writer, who has been living amongst them and enjoyed opportunity for some considerable intercourse with men of different shades of opinion in both political camps. It only seems necessary to add in this connection that, though writing from Peking and Tientsin, I have striven to avoid giving undue prominence to the Northern point of view.

In the matter of acknowledgments, apart from those due to Chinese friends and others, whose names it would be indiscreet to mention, I have to express my deep sense of obligation to Sir John Jordan, His Majesty's Minister in Peking, for authorising the use of several of the excellent translations of documents prepared by the able staff of the Legation's Chinese Secretariat. In the same connection I am indebted for assistance to my friend Mr. E. G. Jamieson, of H.M. Consular Service, and to the foreign Press in China in the few cases where I have been unable to secure copies of the original text.

I also desire to express my acknowledgments to my friend Lieut.-Colonel M. E. Willoughby, 2nd Lancers (Gardner's Horse), lately Military Attaché to H.M. Legation at Peking, for information and technical suggestions in connection with the military operations at and about Hankow.

I have also to record my indebtedness to the Press of China, on which I have freely drawn for details which were otherwise beyond my reach; to Mr. M. Morikawa, of the *China Tribune*, for information from Japanese sources; to the Editor of the *Peking and Tientsin Times* for permission to reproduce the account of Mr. Sowerby's expedition which appears in Appendix A; to the Editor of *The Times* for permission to include a translation by "A Student of Chinese" which appeared in *The Times* of February 20th, 1912; and to the Editor of the *Economist* for permission to utilise portions of three articles contributed to that journal.

In the matter of illustrations I have to thank my friend Mr. H. J. W. Marshall, of the Imperial Railways of North China, and Messrs. C. E. le Munyon, R. Gartner, Franz Scholtz, and Yamamoto, photographers, of Peking and Tientsin, for permission to reproduce from photographs taken by them. For all other photographs I have to content myself with a general acknowledgment, as they have been procured through friends in different parts of China, and their source is unknown to me.

In conclusion, I venture to ask the indulgence of readers towards any traces of haste, many instances of which must, I fear, be only too apparent. At the time I undertook the task of providing the MS. for the following pages I had not foreseen certain abnormal professional and private calls, which have much shortened my time and prevented that final revision which I should have desired, and which in an account of contemporary events is so essential to the preservation of just proportions.

P. H. K.

August 28th, 1912.

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NOTE.—"The characters on the cover may be freely translated: Destroy the Manchus and Restore the sons of Han: *lit.*, Extinguish Man (the Manchus), Prosper Han (a dynasty of the golden age in China on which Chinese look back with pride)." It was the legend under which the Revolutionaries raised the Standard of Revolt.

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THE PASSING OF THE MANCHUS

CHAPTER I

THE OLD CONDITIONS

A HISTORY in which the Revolution in China is the central fact would appear at first sight to be the record of a series of dramatic events rapidly culminating in a profound change in political institutions. In the course of a few months the last of the great Oriental despotisms has passed away. The Throne of Ch'ienlung, of Yunglo, of Kublai Khan, the grandson of Genghis, conqueror of half Asia and menace to mediæval Europe, and of many another commanding figure in a story which goes back to the dawn of history, has crumbled and ceased to be. In its stead has reared itself, for the moment at any rate, a Government in name, a Republic, the embodiment, in political theory, of Equality and Freedom.

But the Revolution stands for something more than these things. It represents not only a revolt against intolerably bad government and the expression of intense racial hatred, with their resulting change. It is also the manifestation of the working of that stern law of nature which decrees that nations must progress or lose their place.

Thus three distinct causes have been at work, and if we would form a just appreciation of the significance of recent events and a reasonable understanding of the problems of the present and future, we must submit to a brief reference to the conditions on which they have been operating. At the risk of traversing well-worn paths, we must remind ourselves of the characteristic elements of China's history.

We must recall the nature of her civilisation and institutions. For it is these things which constitute the ground-work of the story and form the foundations on which the modern forces, having destroyed the old structure, are now busily essaying the task of building the new.

"The present," wrote Bishop Stubbs, "is deeply rooted in the past." And true of English political evolution, it can be no less true of the conditions of a country where much of another and a very different age, often in its pristine form, is with us still. "The China of to-day," wrote Mr. Morse as lately as 1907, but with especial reference to Chinese administration, "is with minor differences the China of the past." A few years earlier, certainly within a generation, Mr. Morse might have written safely in general terms.

This relatively advanced state was reached many centuries ago. Contemporaneous with the age of Greek culture, while Rome was yet an infant city and the rest of Europe in a condition of barbarism, the Chinese were a civilised race. Many years before the Christian era they had evolved, under the name of Taoism, a set of principles and a mystic teaching based on the writings of Laotzu, which formed a not altogether despicable substitute for a religion, while in Confucianism they enjoyed a sound philosophy. Under these influences the arts of peace gradually achieved the first place among the national ideas. The application of principles of reason to the relationships of daily life, the adjustment of differences by discussion, and the cultivation of respect for age and learning, became cardinal principles.

It seems hardly necessary to repeat these things, so well known are they to everyone with even the most superficial acquaintance with China and her history. But, on the other hand, it is perhaps not easy to obtain a clear-cut impression of the basic elements of the New China without bringing together within a brief compass a few of the more salient features of the old.

So far we have only suggested in general terms some of the moral aspects of the national life. To turn now to other sides. Socially the unit was the family, as opposed to

the individual, with its characteristics of *patria potestas*, adoption that continuity might be preserved and provision made by those who were childless for their subsequent worship in the Ancestral Hall, and a species of common inheritance whereby, save in exceptional cases, the family property is maintained undivided.

In the material world the Chinese were industrious and thrifty. Primarily expert husbandmen, they also achieved considerable skill in the mechanical arts, and many monuments, the list headed by the Great Wall, survive to testify to their marvellous engineering skill. Nor were they behindhand in the matter of political institutions. The feudalism which had prevailed in early times disappeared in the third century before Christ, and thence onward the country was united under the rule of an Emperor, whose decrees were the law of the land to which men owed and yielded implicit obedience. Few things indeed are more striking than the resignation with which down to the last few years the Imperial commands, no matter how capricious or unjust, have been fulfilled. Without trial, often without being allowed a word in their defence, men have gone to their death at the bidding of the Vermilion Pencil, unquestioning.

For the convenience of government the country was divided and subdivided into administrative areas, ruled by officials appointed by the Throne. But though in theory the people had no share in the government, in practice they largely governed themselves. A country in the main of village communities, they developed the communal instincts and the principle of collective as opposed to individual responsibility, obtaining in a substantial degree the management of local affairs. But they also got far beyond this. A polity came into existence which, despite an autocratic rule, engendered the spirit of democracy. With the exception of the descendants of Confucius, and in more recent times the Manchu princes and a few modern creations, China has no hereditary aristocracy. Thus officials were of necessity recruited from among the people, a condition of affairs that early resulted in the adoption of the principle that learning, or to be more precise, caligraphy, literary style and mastery of

the Chinese classical writings, should be the qualification for official life. From this it followed that, inasmuch as the acquisition of learning, in the Chinese sense, was mainly a matter of intense application and the system of examinations scrupulously fair, it was possible for the children even of the poor to open to themselves a career which might lead to the highest positions in the country. It is true that during recent years there has been a sad falling away from this glorious tradition, and the possession of money and influence has made it possible to enter official life. But formerly, with rare exceptions and subject to the inevitable selection of a proportion of the officials from amongst the members of the dominant race in times of alien dynasties, learning was the only door.

Finally, perhaps the most eloquent testimony to the superiority and strength of Chinese civilisation is to be found in the fact that the civilisations of China's foreign conquerors, Tartar, Mongol, and Manchu, have one after another been absorbed.

Once reached, however, the point which such a condition of things indicates was not passed. As far as progress in the true sense was concerned, the Chinese seemed to have achieved their destiny. Dynasties rose and fell, leaving the characteristic elements of life and thought unchanged. The Chinese had reached that stage in their history as a nation when all forward impulse appeared to have been exhausted. They had become what historians of political institutions call a stationary society.

Of this apparently inexplicable state of affairs the Rev. Arthur Smith supplies a delightfully simple, if somewhat unscientific, explanation. "What the Occidental insists upon knowing," he says, "is why the Chinese did not continue to improve when they had once entered upon the upward path. And this is one of the standing puzzles of Chinese history. To the Chinese, however, there is no mystery, and nothing whatever to be explained. It was a pithy saying of President Wayland to a class of boys whom he addressed, that 'When a thing is as good as it can be, you cannot make it better.' If Dr. Wayland had been the first of the long line of Chinese sages, he could not more aptly have expressed the underlying subsumption

which has always dwelt in the Chinese national consciousness."

The time was to come, however, when the Chinese would require to awake to a sense of their limitations and endeavour to fulfil the conditions that were demanded for their continued existence on the plane of a great State. The world, which China had once led, was destined to overtake and pass her with rapid strides.

The demands of the laws of nature which prescribe the course of evolution and control the destinies of men may not be denied. The time comes when a people either must progress or fall behind. History, indeed, holds many examples. One by one, as its pages have unfolded, the great customary empires of the East, stationary societies every one of them, have been shorn of their ancient glories, and have shrunk before the progressive civilisation of the West. China alone of those links with the distant and picturesque past has retained her polity and something of her former state. Hitherto she has been to some extent successful in resisting the insidious process of decay. By yielding in a measure to the demands of the modern world she has maintained a precarious place. But her resistance has been in the main along the old lines, and it has long been evident that this could not continue. In one form or another a great change had to come, and the forces that made for it have produced the realisation of its necessity.

Thus the history of the Revolution becomes the story of an inevitable change consequent on the alteration in the world relationships of the Chinese people. It is the record of the permeation, or the partial permeation, of new ideas through a population, or a section of a population, said to approach four hundred millions,* and the adoption of strange forms. It is the tale of a nation's struggle for efficiency and for the qualities that make for strength. It is the inquiry into the working of new forces on a social order which for all practical purposes is of the patriarchal type, and which has been virtually fixed for two thousand years.

How far exactly this change has gone; how far the people are imbued with the new ideas; whether this great up-

* The latest census puts the population at three hundred and twenty millions, but foreign estimates are higher.

heaval represents a universal feeling for progress or is merely the temporary response by the unreasoning masses to the call of a small minority realising something of their country's needs; the extent of the influence and the honesty of purpose of the protagonists in the new scheme of things; whether the time has yet arrived when representative institutions can be readily assimilated; whether a Republic can be the permanent form of government for a people whose democracy, wide as it is, has only grown under the shadow of an autocratic hand, or for a people who for generations have regarded the occupant of the Dragon Throne as the Son of Heaven—these questions have to be squarely faced, with all that they imply. According to their answer, material for which, it is hoped, will be found at least in part in the following pages, may be gauged the measure of success that will attend the Revolution.

CHAPTER II

ASPIRATIONS TOWARDS PROGRESS

THE process which has been called the Awakening of China has been the result of the operation of external forces on the condition of things which has just been described. But although there had been occasional intercourse with the outside world, dating even from classical times, and missionary and trade relations of varying extent had existed since the sixteenth century, it was long before the points of contact became sufficiently large to produce any appreciable influence. For all practical purposes, prior to the conclusion of the treaty of Nanking in 1842 they were confined, with the exception of the limited connections of the Roman and Greek Churches in Peking, to the narrow area of the business establishments at Canton known as the foreign factories, and to the Portuguese settlement of Macao. Nor were other conditions more favourable to the growth of new ideas. Under the old scheme of things in China the trader occupied the least honourable place, and was therefore the last person to be allowed to exert an influence, while receptivity of foreign suggestions could scarcely have been described as a Chinese characteristic. On the contrary, the Chinese attitude, when it was not one of active hostility, was one of contemptuous tolerance. At that time no doubt was entertained as to the relative degree of enlightenment between the black-haired race and the men from afar. China, in the language of the country, was the Middle Kingdom, and the rest of mankind were outer barbarians. The idea that the East might some day learn the lessons of the West would have been unthinkable.

It might have been supposed that the military superiority displayed in the operations which had resulted in the Treaty

of Nanking, the opening of five ports to foreign residence and trade, and the cession of Hongkong to Great Britain, would have done something to dissipate such ideas. But this does not seem to have been the case, and all the evidence is clear to show that seventy years ago the Chinese were in the state of mind in which they had been for several centuries, and were fully intending to continue in the same path.

As time went on and more ports were opened to foreign trade, and foreigners came to China in increasing numbers, certain material, as opposed to mental and moral, progress was achieved. The keen business instinct of the people began to respond to the advantages of many Western inventions, with the result that at the Treaty Ports the Chinese soon began to assimilate foreign things. But the heart of the country remained entirely uninfluenced, the official attitude unchanged. It is true that in the late sixties there were for a time indications of a desire on the part of the Government to create a better understanding with foreign nations and to embark the country on the path of regeneration and reform. In 1867 a mission was formed to visit foreign countries and promote improved relationships, but unfortunately its head, Mr. Burlingame, the United States Minister, died at St. Petersburg, and it produced but little result. The second experiment, which was more successful, was the sending of students abroad for education, a progressive move which was largely due to a Chinese of the name of Yung Wing. As a small boy of humble origin, Dr. Yung Wing, as he subsequently became, had been taken into the Morrison School in Canton, which commemorates the great English translator of the Bible. Subsequently he was one of four Chinese boys taken to America by Dr. S. R. Brown, the then head of the school, and educated at Yale. Dr. Yung Wing graduated in 1854, and, acquiring some influence, succeeded in 1871 in inducing the Government to adopt a scheme for sending students abroad. The sentiment that inspired its acceptance, however, soon disappeared, and despite its favourable start the scheme failed to achieve its great promise. It was limited to a comparatively small number of students, and even these were destined for many years after their return home

to be regarded with suspicion and denied opportunity. The fact was that the country and officials had not as yet begun to move out of the old and narrow groove. Indeed, one of the most striking demonstrations of unprogressive instinct and prejudice had yet to be given. In 1877 a short narrow-gauge railway between Shanghai and Woosung, a little pioneer line, was ruthlessly destroyed, its rails torn up, and, together with the rolling stock, dumped on the beach of Formosa, where it was left to rot and decay, while on the site of the Shanghai station, as a protest against the sacrilege of the sacred soil of China, was erected a temple to the Queen of Heaven.

In a sense, however, this incident, which, to be just, must be attributed, inexcusable though it was, in part to resentment against the methods which had been employed by the foreigners interested in the scheme, may be said to have marked the lowest reading in the barometer of modern progress. In the north, Tong King Sing,* the founder of the China Merchants' Steam Navigation Company, had enlisted the support of Li Hung Chang, the great Viceroy of Chihli, in a colliery project in the Kaiping coalfield and the construction of a railway to connect it with the sea. At first, of course, great and frequently foolish opposition was experienced, but in the end a start was made. Even then, however, the march of progress was painfully slow. Only by 1888 was the railway allowed to be carried to Tientsin, a distance of eighty miles, and that only on strategic grounds. Beyond this, and the laying in 1881 of the first telegraph cable between Shanghai and Tientsin, which proved the foundation of the great telegraph system now worked throughout the length and breadth of the country, and the construction of some inconsiderable harbour-works at Kelung, in Formosa, and a section of railway designed by the enlightened governor, Liu Ming Chuan, to open up the island, the principal item of progress in the next few years was the establishment of a few cotton mills at Shanghai.

The results of the Japanese War, however, rudely surprised China from her lethargy, and it is from the humiliating treaty of peace concluded at Shimonoseki in

* Tong King Sing had also been educated in the Morrison School.

1895, that the modern industrial history of China may be said to date. At last, into the minds of a few prominent men beyond the influence of the Treaty Ports the idea was driven that there was something lacking in the material conditions of the country, and chequered as has been the subsequent course of industrialism in China, the stream has at least flowed in the general direction of the creation of an industrial country on Western lines.

Political evolution has followed in much the same path, though the first stirrings of a political consciousness were of considerably later date than the more material side of progress advocated by such men as Tong King Sing. And not unnaturally so. Aspirations to political reform and change are entertained at no small measure of risk under Oriental despotisms. The atmosphere of autocracy is not favourable to the growth of that discussion of abstract principles which Mr. Bagehot, in one of his illuminating writings, tells us makes for progress. The Imperial resentment is ruthless and rapid. From the Decrees of the Vermilion Pencil there is no appeal, and men who offend can only suffer, clad in the dignity of silence.

To Sun Wen, better known as Dr. Sun Yat Sen, appears to belong the honour of being the first to devote his life openly to the modern movement for political reform. Born in the province of Kuangtung in 1867, in his youth he became converted to Christianity, and under missionary auspices acquired a knowledge of English and a taste for medicine and surgery. The founding of a medical school at Hongkong about this time gave him the opportunity of securing a qualification.

In 1892 he commenced practice as a physician and surgeon in the Portuguese Colony of Macao. There, according to authorised statements, Sun Wen came in contact, almost accidentally, with a recently formed band of men of progressive tendencies, with whom he found himself in sympathy, and ultimately became intimately associated. According to other authorities, who may be more just to his achievements than he is willing to be to himself, Sun Wen had long been fired with the ambition to remedy the evils of the social conditions of China, the corruption of officials, and the weakness

of the people. The idea took root in his mind that the remedy lay in political equality. He was acquainted with the freedom which exists under British rule. He also had some knowledge of American Republican ideals, and he thought to apply these things to China.

He thereupon founded the Hsing Chung Hui, and became connected with the Ko Lao Hui and the San Ho Hui, the famous Triad, and other secret societies. Steadily gaining adherents, his principles began to be known more widely, while he himself came to be regarded as a dangerous man in official eyes.

This period of Dr. Sun Yat Sen's career, and the first stage in the reform movement on the basis of what afterwards developed into Republican aspirations, came to an end in 1895. At this time, as a result of the wave of feeling, almost of horror, which passed over the country after China's defeat in the Chino-Japanese War, the Emperor was reported favourably disposed towards reform. A petition for the redress of grievances had therefore been prepared in Canton, extensively signed, and forwarded to Peking. But while it was still under consideration a local disturbance was attributed to these young reformers, some of the more prominent of whom were promptly arrested. Sun Yat Sen and others escaped, and then conceived the idea of capturing the city of Canton and founding a Republic for the Province of Kuangtung. How the scheme failed is matter of history. Its success depended on the juncture of a large body of men from Swatow with the malcontents of Canton, which the Imperial troops frustrated. The incipient rising was speedily crushed, and Sun Wen and others became fugitives from justice.

While Sun Yat Sen was occupying himself with dreams of a revolutionised China, culminating in the planning of a new order on Republican lines, a fellow provincial, who also seems to have been an original thinker and to have had the welfare of his country at heart, had been devoting himself to a careful study of existing conditions and the needs of the times. This man was K'ang Yu Wei.

Apart from his writings, K'ang first came into prominence at the close of the Japanese War, when he was largely responsible for a memorial from a number of scholars,

urging upon the Throne the necessity of adopting reform measures that should save the country from a repetition of the recent humiliation.

It is probable that the Emperor Kuang Hsü was not unimpressed by this memorial, but at this time the great industrial developments to which allusion has been made were being discussed, and political reform, which was distasteful, generally speaking, to the Manchu Court in Peking, was relegated to the background.

As time went on, however, a change began to inspire the Imperial counsels in Peking. Foreign relations, which manifested themselves from the Chinese point of view in the loss of Kiaochau and the surrender of other territory which followed it, had been rapidly becoming more involved. The finances of the country were in a state of grave confusion. Under present conditions the Imperial contributions from the provinces by the time they reached Peking were barely sufficient for the needs of Government, and left no margin for emergencies. The great railway and industrial schemes, so much talked of and on which such hopes had been set, so far from furnishing any immediate prospect of financial salvation, were only creating international complications and threatened dangerous foreign entanglements. Nor were attempts to float a big national loan for subscription by the people any more successful. It began to be felt that more drastic measures were required if anything like progress towards the ideal of the creation of a strong China was to be achieved.

The growth of the new spirit was first observable in the spring of 1898, its earliest manifestation being in the form of two Imperial Edicts issued in June. The first of these Imperial utterances referred to the selection of officials for the public service, and called upon viceroys to look for men of "good reputation in everyday life, with a knowledge of modern things." The second Edict dealt in direct language with the need of reform.

"There are some among the older officials," ran a significant passage of the latter document, "who affirm that the old ways are best and need no alteration, and that the new plans are not required. Such babblings are vain and useless.

"The Emperor puts the question before you thus: In the present condition of Imperial affairs, with an untrained army, with limited funds, with ignorant 'literati,' and with artisans untaught because they have no fit teachers, is there any difficulty in deciding, when China is compared with foreign nations, who is the strong and who is the weak? It is easy to distinguish between the rich and the poor. How can a man armed with a wooden stick smite his foe encased in a coat of mail?

"The Emperor sees that the affairs of the Empire are in an unsettled condition, and that his various Decrees have availed nothing. Diversity of opinion, each unlike another as fire differs from water, is responsible for the spread of the existing evil. It is the same evil as that which existed in the Sung and Ming dynasties (*circa* A.D. 1000 and 1500). Our present system is not of the slightest use. We cannot in these modern days adhere to the ways of the Five Kings (*circa* B.C. 2500); even they did not continue exactly after the manner of their respective predecessors. It is like wearing thick clothes in summer and thin ones in winter.

"Now, therefore, the Emperor orders all officials, metropolitan and provincial, from princes down to literati, to give their whole minds to a real endeavour to improvement. With perseverance, like that of the saints of old, do your utmost to discover which foreign country has the best system in any branch of learning and learn that one. Your great fault is the falseness of your present knowledge. Make a special effort and determine to learn the best of everything. Do not merely learn the outside covers of the books of knowledge, and do not make a loud boast of your own attainments. The Emperor's wish is to change what is now useless into something useful, so that proficiency may be attained and handed on to posterity."

In response to the appeal for capable men K'ang Yu Wei was introduced to the Emperor's notice by Weng T'ung Ho, an influential member of the Grand Council, who had been the Emperor's tutor. At this time and for many years before there had been a constant struggle in the Imperial counsels between the Northern officials and those from the South, the former being supported by the Empress-Dowager, Tzu Hsi, who, though then in

retirement, yet managed to keep her finger on the pulse of affairs, and the latter by the Emperor, who may have seen in them greater hope for the future than in the more narrow policy represented by the Manchu point of view. In introducing K'ang, Weng T'ung Ho is usually credited with being more actuated by the idea of securing the ascendancy of the Southern faction, of which he was one of the leaders, than by any special predilection towards reform.*

Be this as it may, however, a new force was admitted, the results of which could scarcely have been foreseen. K'ang was already known to the Emperor by reputation. Earlier in the year he had been called before the Tsungli Yamen, the old Foreign Office, and his views on reforms and proposals for effecting them had been duly reported to His Majesty, who seems to have been sufficiently impressed to call for their statement in the form of a memorial.

K'ang Yu Wei, whose ideas had for long been crystallised, had no difficulty in placing on record a comprehensive scheme. In the forefront of his programme was found the revision of the laws and the reform of the administration, without which, as he wisely pointed out, all other reforms would be virtually useless. For this task he urged the selection of young and intelligent men imbued with Western ideas, who should be assisted by competent foreign advisers.

For the rest, in brief, the Emperor was urged to embark the country on the lines of progress which had been followed by Japan, to substitute a new regime for the old, to educate the people, and to form departments of State on Western lines.

There is no doubt that on the ideas of this memorial was largely based the Emperor's Decree of June 11th (already quoted), which marked the commencement of what has been called the Hundred Days' Reform.

On the 16th of June, a day or two after his formal introduction to the Imperial notice, K'ang Yu Wei was granted an audience by the Emperor, which lasted for over two hours, and completed the supremacy of K'ang's in-

* Weng T'ung Ho was spared the embarrassments in which his protégé would have involved him, owing to his sudden dismissal from office at the instance of the Empress-Dowager a few days later.

fluence. Thereafter Reform Decrees followed each other in rapid succession. The celebrated classical essay system, skill in which represented the hall-mark of scholarship, the basis of the country's intellectual life and, as already observed, the path to office, was abolished. Schools and colleges for the dissemination of modern learning were to be established in all provincial capitals, prefectural and district cities. The Board of War was ordered to look into and report on several proposals for army reform. The foundation of naval colleges was decreed with a view to the reorganisation of the fleet. A bureau was to be opened at Shanghai for translating Western scientific and literary works and textbooks for schools and colleges. Exhortations were delivered to officials to address themselves conscientiously to the questions of reform, and several sinecures were designated for immediate abolition. In a word, there were to be engrafted on the most conservative of polities changes such as, in their aggregate, the world had never witnessed, and with the inauguration of which must cease many of the emoluments of the occupants of high places.

It was unfortunate for China that in the spring of the year, just before the embarkation on this vast and unconsidered scheme of reform, Prince Kung had died. The last surviving son of the Emperor Taokuang, his experience and services as a statesman and the soundness and independence of his mind ensured respect for his views both from the Emperor, who was his nephew, and from his sister-in-law, the Empress-Dowager. Nor did he carry less weight with the Imperial clan. For many years he had exercised a moderating influence on the extreme reactionary wing of the Manchu party, and on more than one occasion had induced them to follow the counsels of the more wisely informed minds. Neither an unprogressive man nor blind to the need of reform, there can be no doubt that, while the Emperor would have received his sympathetic support, he would have thrown his weight in the scale against extravagant measures. Had Prince Kung lived, the course of history must have been greatly changed. The unfortunate Kuang Hsü would almost certainly have never ceased to rely on his guidance, and might have been saved

from the unhappy end which Fate so rapidly wove for him. K'ang Yu Wei might never have been called into prominence, and even if he had emerged from his relative obscurity the mature wisdom of Prince Kung must have purged his schemes of their most dangerous features. None appreciated better than he the necessity of hastening slowly, which, indeed, was the only policy which could offer any hope, and none saw more clearly the futility of sudden and drastic change.

To the policy adopted by the Emperor, under the influence of K'ang Yu Wei, there could be but one of two ends. Either the Emperor must form around himself a party sufficiently strong to stifle all opposition, or the unprogressive elements must rise up and in some shape or form reassert their influence. This was early seen by K'ang Yu Wei. That the reaction would take the form of a rally round the Empress-Dowager, who in such circumstances would in all probability emerge from her retirement, was equally obvious. And as the existence of this danger forced itself on his mind—and the danger was especially serious for K'ang Yu Wei personally, owing to his violent attacks on Tzu Hsi, whom he had criticised unsparingly—he cast about for means to combat it. By this time, however, things had gone too far for half-measures to be effective, and in an evil moment for Kuang Hsü he was induced to enter into a plot for the capture of the person of the Empress-Dowager with a view to her seclusion under the Emperor's control.

The fate which attended this plot is matter of history, and the circumstances of the attempt to carry it out have possibly little or nothing to do with the record of the various aspirations towards reform. In the light of the events of later years, however, they seem to require to be referred to.

The central feature in the scheme was to secure the control of the Northern Army. This was under the command of Jung Lu, Viceroy of the Metropolitan Province of Chihli, with his seat at Tientsin, and kinsman and life-long friend of the Empress-Dowager. It was realised, of course, that nothing could be done unless Jung Lu was first disposed of, and after due deliberation it was decided to employ

Yuan Shih K'ai, who, after making away with Jung Lu, would go swiftly to Peking with 10,000 trained men and imprison the Empress-Dowager in the Summer Palace.

Yuan was now in his fortieth year. He had been Imperial Resident in Corea prior to the Chino-Japanese War and was at this time Judicial Commissioner in Chihli.

On the first of the eighth moon, being the 15th of September, 1898, Yuan was received in audience and carefully sounded as to his views in general, with the expression of which the Emperor was apparently so satisfied that, as a preliminary step, he assigned to Yuan's charge the business of army reform, the appointment being duly promulgated by Imperial Edict.

Four days now elapsed, when Yuan Shih K'ai was accorded a final audience before leaving for Tientsin. According to the account of the historians of the times,* "His Majesty received him in the Palace of Heavenly Purity (Ch'ien Ch'ing Kung) of the Forbidden City. Every precaution was taken to prevent the conversation being overheard. Seated for the last time on the great lacquered Dragon Throne, so soon to be reoccupied by the Empress-Dowager, in the gloomy throne-room, which the morning light could scarcely penetrate, His Majesty told Yuan Shih K'ai the details of the commission with which he had decided to entrust him. He was to put Jung Lu to death, and then, returning immediately to the capital with the troops under his command, to seize and imprison the Empress-Dowager. The Emperor gave him a small arrow, the symbol of his authority to carry out the Imperial orders, and bade him proceed with all haste to Tientsin, there to arrest Jung Lu in his yamen and see to his instant decapitation. Kuang Hsü also handed him a Decree whereby, upon completion of his mission, he was appointed Viceroy of Chihli *ad interim*, and ordered to Peking for further audience.

"Yuan promised faithful obedience, and without speaking to any one, left Peking by the first train. Meantime the 'Old Buddha' † was due to come in from the I-ho Yuan to the Winter Palace that morning at eight o'clock to perform

* "China under the Empress-Dowager," J. O. P. Bland and E. Backhouse, p. 205.

† A nick-name of the Empress Dowager.

sacrifice at the altar to the God of Silkworms, and the Emperor dutifully repaired to the Ying Hsiu Gate of the Western Park, where the Lake Palace is situated, to receive Her Majesty as she entered the precincts.

"Yuan reached Tientsin before noon, and proceeded at once to Jung Lu's yamen. He asked Jung Lu whether he regarded him as a faithful blood brother. (The two men had taken the oath of brotherhood several years before.)

"'Of course I do,' replied the Viceroy. 'You well may, for the Emperor has sent me to kill you, and instead, I now betray his scheme, because of my loyalty to the Empress-Dowager and of my affection for you.' Jung Lu, apparently unaffected by the message, merely expressed surprise that the Old Buddha could have been kept in ignorance of all these things, and added that he would go at once to the capital and see the Empress-Dowager that same evening. Yuan handed him the Emperor's Decree, and Jung Lu, travelling by special train, reached Peking soon after 5 p.m."

The end was now near. On receipt of the news, the Empress-Dowager instantly summoned a secret council of the princes and officials representing the forces of conservatism, at which it was determined that she should resume the reins of government. Next morning the unfortunate Emperor was made prisoner. He was hurried off to a small palace on the island in the lake to the west of the Forbidden City, and, deprived even of the society of his favourite, the Pearl concubine, there left to expiate in solitude the crime of independence of thought and the attempt to revolt against the traditions of his environment.

On the same day, for the due regularisation of her position, and with an ironical touch that it would be hard to surpass, the Empress-Dowager caused the following Edict to be issued in the name of the fallen monarch:—

"The affairs of the nation are at present in a difficult position, and everything awaits reform. I, the Emperor, am working day and night with all my powers, and every day arrange a multitude of affairs. But, despite my careful toil, I constantly fear to be overwhelmed by the press of work.

"I reverently recall that Her Majesty the Empress-Dowager has on

two occasions since the reign of Tung Chih (1861) assumed the reins of government with great success in critical periods. In all she did Her Majesty showed perfection.

"Moved by a deep regard for the welfare of the nation, I have repeatedly implored Her Majesty to be graciously pleased to advise me in government, and have received her assent.

"This is an assurance of prosperity to the whole nation, officials and people.

"Her Majesty will commence to transact business from to-day in the side Hall.

"On the 23rd September I, the Emperor, will lead my princes and high officials to make obeisance in the Ch'in Cheng Hall. Let the proper officials reverently and carefully prepare the fitting programme of the ceremony."

K'ang Yu Wei, who had received a hint a day or two earlier that he was in danger, fled, and together with his principal colleague, Liang Ch'i Chao, escaped Tzu Hsi's wrath. But K'ang's brother and five other reformers, less fortunate, were summarily executed.

Such in brief is the history of the *coup d'état* as the facts have generally presented themselves to the best informed of European observers. It has seemed to derive substantial support from subsequent events. In justice, however, to Yuan Shih K'ai, it should be remarked that the evidence on which rests the grave charge, to which it by implication gives rise, is by no means conclusive. Nor are subsequent events altogether incompatible with other explanations. Some considerable time ago a highly placed Chinese, in the course of a general political discussion, and certainly without *arrière pensée*, informed the present writer that Yuan's apparent default was due to the fact that news of the plot had got abroad, and Jung Lu had been advised and placed in a position to force Yuan's hand. Still more recently Yuan Shih K'ai has deemed it desirable to communicate to the public his own version of the incident, which was accordingly done through the medium of Dr. Morrison in the columns of *The Times*. According to this account, "the Reform Party, led by K'ang Yu Wei, considering that the late Empress-Dowager and the Viceroy of Chihli, Jung Lu, blocked the way of their reforms, conspired for their removal. Jung Lu was to be put to death in his yamen at Tientsin, and the

Empress-Dowager was to be interned as a State prisoner. Yuan Shih K'ai, whose progressive views were well known, was to execute these plans. He was to go to Tientsin, put Jung Lu, his patron and benefactor, to death, and was then to return immediately to Peking with his foreign drilled troops, and there seize and imprison the Empress-Dowager.

"On the night of September 18, 1898, the reformer, Tan Tzu Tung, one of the K'ang Yu Wei party, and Secretary of the Grand Council, called on Yuan. After ordering all the servants out of their presence, and after a few words of introduction, he denounced Jung Lu in scathing terms, and laid the plan before Yuan, saying that the scheme had the Emperor's consent and approval. At the conclusion of his speech he produced a rough draft of the proposed plot, written in ordinary black ink, and invited Yuan's co-operation. Yuan replied that there was no Imperial Order for him to undertake the task. Tan said that on the 20th a secret order from the Emperor would surely be given. On Yuan's further objecting that such a plan could not be executed suddenly, but needed mature deliberation and a 'Vermilion Decree,' Tan said: 'I have the Imperial Order with me,' and forthwith handed a document to Yuan. Instead of the Imperial Order written in vermilion, it was a document in black ink, neatly written, its style couched in the tone of the Emperor. It stated that his Majesty was bent on reform, but since conservative opposition was met everywhere, Yang Jui, Liu Kwangti, Lin Hsu, and Tan Tzu Tung (four of the most active members of the Reform Party) were to devise some 'sound plan of action.'

"Yuan once more objected that the document was not an Imperial Order, since it was not written in vermilion ink, nor did it mention the execution of Jung Lu and the confining of the Empress-Dowager in the Summer Palace. Tan said the Vermilion Order was in Lin Hsu's hands, and that what was produced was only a copy, and added that in truth an Imperial Order had been issued three days before. He assured Yuan that the phrase 'sound plan of action' referred to the disposal of Jung Lu and the imprisonment of the Empress-Dowager.

"As Yuan insisted on a Vermilion Order from the Emperor, and Tan could not show one, there was nothing definite arranged between the two. On taking leave Tan said, 'We depend on you.' Yuan decided that at his audience on the 20th he would sound the Emperor on the subject by referring to the reform movement. Accordingly, when he was summoned for audience, he spoke of the new reform and its difficulties, and the late Emperor was much affected by Yuan's words, but made no reference to the 'sound plan of action.'

"While the Reformers were busy with their plans the Conservatives were not inactive. Huai Ta Pu, Li Shan, and Yang Chung Yi went often to Tientsin, and deliberated in secret with Jung Lu, who was well informed of what was going on by private communications with the reactionaries.

"When Yuan retired from the audience he started for the railway station, where he waited for a friend, with whom he proceeded to Tientsin. On his arrival in Tientsin that evening he called on Jung Lu, who said to him, 'You have come for my head. You had better confess all, because a man (Yang Chung Yi, whose son married the daughter of Lord Li Ching Fang), who was here just now before you came, has told me everything.' Yuan answered: 'What you have heard is but the plot of a few political schemers. His Majesty the Emperor said nothing to me about such a plan, and he is innocent of such a measure.' When they got as far as that part of the conversation the late Admiral Yeh was announced, and later on Ta Yu Wen arrived. They stayed till 11 p.m., and Yuan, seeing no chance of renewing the conversation, returned to his lodging. Next morning, September 21st, Jung Lu called on Yuan, and said, 'Lately friends from Peking have repeatedly informed me of the Reformers' minutest movements. Their daring is astounding. We must rescue the Emperor from their clutches.'

"When Jung Lu returned to his yamen he summoned Ta Yu Wen for consultation, and sent for Yuan in the evening. Yang Chung Yi was present, and produced an Edict sent by wire informing Jung Lu that the Reformers' plot had been exposed in Peking, that the Emperor was in durance, and that the Empress-Dowager had resumed the Regency. On dismissing Yuan from his presence, Jung Lu pointed to the

teacup and said, 'You can drink; there is no poison in your tea.' Four days afterwards, on September 25th, Jung Lu was called to Peking, and on the 28th he was transferred to the Grand Council and given the rank and power of generalissimo."

Though it is only right to set down these versions side by side, it is unnecessary to comment upon them. The observant reader, however, will have perceived that two of them appear to fall or stand on whether Jung Lu went to Peking the day before the *coup d'état* or not till three days later. The point has perhaps escaped the observation of the friends of Yuan Shih K'ai, who, it is to be hoped, may be in a position to furnish conclusive testimony and finally dispose of an incident which has prejudiced his Excellency for many years.

CHAPTER III

THE MANCHU PROMISE OF REFORM

THE return of the Empress-Dowager to power resulted in a period of reaction which culminated in the Boxer outbreak of 1900. It is not necessary to our present purpose, however, to trace the details of that short fateful period of Chinese history which has been so often and so well told. It will be sufficient to observe that there can be no doubt that if Tzu Hsi did not actually foster the anti-foreign movement, she at least knowingly permitted its growth, while her complicity in the later phases has been clearly established. For a time her policy represented the counsels of madness, which ill-accorded with the characteristic dictates of her usually well-balanced mind. Had she been in the habit of making confession she would probably have admitted that this was the period in her long career on which she least cared to look back. She had suffered herself to be dominated by the blind passion of narrow and cruel minds and by their childish estimates of the forces of the outside world. She had caused unspeakable outrages to be committed, and worst of all had blundered.

The advance of the Allies to the relief of the Legations in Peking and the flight of the Court to Hsianfu compelled the realisation of these things. The insistent demands of the foreign Governments for the punishment of the guilty, irrespective of power and place, only brought home more emphatically the parlous condition of affairs and the depths of humiliation in which her folly had plunged her.

The problems that lay ahead were twofold in their nature. Tzu Hsi's personal pride dictated that she must rehabilitate herself in the estimate of foreign nations, her

statesmanship that she must study and meet the needs of the country.

The position was not an easy one. She had to be prepared for suspicion at home and abroad at every action, and to overcome a distrust that might well have been regarded as insuperable. How well she ultimately succeeded with a placable world, where memories grow faint and life is too short for long animosities, affords no mean criterion of her capacity and judgment. But her grasp of the country's needs and the efforts she made to meet them constitute an even more remarkable memorial.

It has been generally supposed among foreigners that when the Emperor Kuang Hsü embarked on his reforming campaign his ideas fell on barren soil. This, however, was by no means the case. According to the testimony of competent observers, his ideas found much favour among an intelligent, if relatively small, section throughout the country, and evoked an enthusiastic response which would have eventuated in a useful measure of co-operation. The results of the war with Japan had cut deeper and stirred the imagination of the people more than had been supposed. Minds were awakening to the need of change, despite the blighting effect of tradition and superstition. The Emperor's programme met a need which in many cases had become articulate, while in others it gave form to unconscious gropings after something which for the time defied expression. The Emperor's programme also did something more. It caused many to think, and commenced the operation of accustoming the country at large to the idea of change. And it did so in a manner which quite unconsciously was calculated to appeal to the masses of the people in a few brief weeks to a degree that would have been impossible to the teachings of the most ardent apostles of reform in almost as many years. The Emperor, the sacrosanct occupant of the Dragon Throne, had unsparingly condemned the inefficiency of the governing classes, and expressed something like genuine sorrow over the condition of the country. He had taken the people into his confidence in the most affecting way, and had appealed to each one of his subjects for such co-operation and assistance as lay in his power. Decrees had been scattered

broadcast through the land purging, and sometimes destroying, the old and inaugurating the new. It was a thing to appeal even to the most ignorant and stupid, whose imagination can often be aroused where they cannot perhaps be reached through their reason. In a country like China the effect of such action cannot be over-estimated. "The king can do no wrong," yet here was the Son of Heaven admitting his faults, and frankly condemning the system for which he stood. The educative effect of such a declaration, made not once but many times, must not be overlooked. In preparing the way for reform it was worth to those who afterwards constituted the young China party many years of pamphleteering and agitation.

Nor had the reformers, who went to their death so unflinchingly, died in vain. The sequel to the Emperor's great effort had sent a wave of disappointment and horror sweeping across the country. The cause had been sanctified by martyrdom. In Kuangtung and Kiangsu, the provinces of the great cities of Canton and Shanghai, the feeling ran so high that in the South there seemed at one time a distinct danger of revolution. And though in the country at large the reversion to the old state of affairs was accepted with resignation and in silence in the customary Eastern way, the close observer could not but be aware of a sense of change. A glimpse had been afforded of a new era. The promise was doubtless fairer than its realisation could by any possibility have been, and the attempt to realise it by hasty and ill-considered measures might even have opened the door to a new set of worse abuses. But this is not in the philosophy of common men. New possibilities had been opened up, and it was beyond human power to plunge the country back again into a state as though such possibilities had never been.

It is not clear when the Empress-Dowager commenced to realise this aspect of the Hundred Days' Reform and the *coup d'état*, which is one which has scarcely been sufficiently emphasised, if not somewhat generally overlooked. But certainly it could not have been later than on her flight towards Hsianfu. It was then and during the early days of the sojourn of the Court at this ancient capital of China that she began to see clearly that reform must be

introduced from within, otherwise it would be forced on the Government from without in a form which might threaten the Manchu House.

By implication the admission involved censure on herself and her policy since the autumn of 1898. But the Empress-Dowager never lacked the courage of her convictions, and on the 28th of January, 1901, while peace was yet far off,* we find her causing the issue of a Decree, in which indeed she condemned K'ang Yu Wei and his friends as rebels who had been guilty of high treason, but declared her intention to embark on a scheme of reform, which in the outcome must necessarily involve the adoption of the principles promulgated by the Emperor Kuang Hsü and by Her Majesty subsequently abrogated.

This magnificent document, for no other adjective seems fitly to describe it, formed the foundation of the Imperial plans for reform of the past decade. It was couched in the following terms:—

"There are certain eternal principles which from the beginning of time have remained constant without change, and will thus for ever continue. Of human ordinances there is none so permanently established that it cannot be subject to alteration. In the Canon of Changes (I Ching) it is written that 'when a measure has lost effective force, the time for adapting it to modified conditions has arrived.' And the Master in the Analects stated that 'it may be known wherein the various dynasties took from or added to the regulations of their predecessors.'

"Now as the Sun and Stars in the Heavens shed constant light on the world, so do the three cardinal virtues and the five constituents of worth remain for ever immutable. But there is no more objection to altering any particular human ordinance than there is in putting fresh strings to a lute or a guitar. Throughout the ages successive generations have introduced new methods or abolished effete institutions. And all our ancestors have similarly, as occasion demanded, from time to time suited the requirements of Government to existing circumstances.

"The conditions under which the Dynasty ruled after the passage of the Great Wall differed from those which obtained while it was at Mukden, and how can the system of government in force in the times of Yung Chêng and Ch'ien Lung apply in its entirety to the period after Chia Ch'ing and Tao Kuang? As a rule laws become obsolete in course of time, and once obsolete require to be revised, and made to subserve their primary object of strengthening the State and benefiting the people.

* The Peace Protocol was signed on the 7th of September, 1901.

"Since the removal of the Court, day and night is the Empress-Dowager consumed with anxiety, and We Ourselves do not cease from vehement self-reproach, when we reflect to how great an extent the accumulated and continued abuses and the perfunctory and specious routine of the last tens of years have contributed towards the present calamitous situation.

"Now that peace negotiations have commenced the whole system of government must be radically reformed, in the hope that strength and prosperity may gradually be attained. The Empress-Dowager has enjoined on Us the necessity of appropriating the good qualities of foreign nations, so that by aid thereof the shortcomings of China may be supplemented, and that the experiences of the past may serve as a lesson for the future.

"Since 1897 and 1898 disturbances, based on fictitious grounds, have been of constant occurrence, and the instigators thereof have unwarrantably assumed the title of reformers. The evil caused by the rebels of the K'ang faction has been even greater than that brought about by those dealers in magic—the Boxers. Even though the former have fled to far countries across the seas, they still continue to lead men astray with their Pu-yu and Kuei-wei * certificates of membership, and incite to rebellion. They further, by raising the false cry of upholding the Emperor and supporting the race, seek to create dissension in the Court itself.

"Now it is well known that new schemes propounded by the K'ang rebels are those of revolutionaries and not reformers. Taking advantage of Our indisposition they secretly plotted sedition, and it was only by an appeal for guidance on Our part to the Empress-Dowager that We were saved from immediate peril, and the evil was rooted out in the course of a day. Can any one bring proof, however, that in suppressing such insurrectionary movement the Empress-Dowager declined to sanction reform on progressive lines? Or can any one assert that in balancing the arguments against and in favour of old institutions We advocated a complete abolition thereof? Our officers and Our people must be aware that Mother and Son were actuated by one and the same motive, namely to steer the ship of State on a course midway between the two extremes, and that once having made choice of a path tending to perfection they would continue to pursue the same.

"We have now received Her Majesty's instructions to use the utmost endeavour to bring about improvement, strictly to interdict the use of the terms new and old, and to make away with all distinction between what is Chinese and what is foreign. The curses of China are the deep hold inveterate habit has on the people, the intricate ramification of her method of literary composition, the great prevalence of mediocrity and the notable absence of conspicuous talent. The average literary composer flounders about in pools of ink, the clerks and yamen runners make fortunes on the strength of their official position. The conduct of public business consists merely in the passing to and fro of official

* A play on the name of K'ang Yu Wei.

papers, no serious object whatever being aimed at. The promotion of rising men is hampered by the rules of seniority, and as a consequence the standard of intellectual attainment is being lowered from day to day. The advancement of personal interests is the bane of the Administration and adherence to prescribed usage is the ruin of the country. Hitherto those who have studied Western methods have confined themselves to an examination of Western languages, literature, manufactures, weapons, and machinery. These are but the rudimentary elements of Western skill. They are by no means the original source whence is derived the statecraft of the West. The precepts handed down by Our ancestors and which correspond with the fundamental principles on which Western prosperity and power are based are 'high station filled with indulgent generosity,' 'a liberal forbearance exercised in presiding over the multitude,' 'sincerity of speech,' and 'execution of purpose.' If China does not devote her whole attention to subjects such as these, but contents herself with acquiring a few words here and there, learning this trade or that craft, while still retaining the old corrupt practices of currying favour with others to benefit oneself, how can she become powerful and prosperous? How can she expect to become so if, disregarding fundamental principles, she limits her studies to rudimentary elements and does not even take the trouble to master these?

"To sum up, old methods must be revised, confirmed abuses be rooted out, and if any regeneration is to be looked for complete reform must be taken into consideration.

"We therefore hereby call upon the members of the Grand Council, the Grand Secretaries, the Six Boards and Nine Ministries, Our various Envoys abroad, the Governors-General and Governors of Provinces, each and all maturely to reflect on the present situation and consider in how far Chinese and Western principles of government apply thereto. Within a period of two months let each submit for Our information detailed proposals, embodying his views and stating what he knows with regard to the following subjects: Dynastic institutes, principles of government, the best means of promoting the welfare of the people educational establishments, systems of examination, military organisation, and financial administration. They will each duly weigh what can be adopted and what rejected, in what direction economies can be effected or amalgamation take place. They must either seek knowledge at the hands of others or, relying on their own mental resources, strive to discover by what means the prestige of the nation can be rehabilitated, natural talent fostered, internal revenue expanded, and the military forces placed on a proper footing. When this shall have been done, We will report to the Empress-Dowager and in consultation with Her Majesty, acting on Her advice, will adopt what methods seem best calculated to further the ends in view and forthwith proceed to carry them into execution.

"Several Memorials had been sent in in response to Our orders issued at T'ai Yuan, calling for expressions of opinion, but the majority thereof can be divided into two classes. The one repeats the journalistic claptrap of newspaper editors, and the other dishes up the shallow views

of pedantic students. The one proposes with curious unanimity reforms of all kinds, but every proposal is vitiated by the persistent bias exhibited. The other realises the good but leaves out of sight what is harmful, with the result that all these proposals are characterised by impracticability. Recently appointed officials, when discussing prosperity and power, have a habit of ignoring the principles underlying these expressions which have previously been taught them, and simple scholars who prate of proper learning are for the most part destitute of knowledge of the world. Ye Metropolitan and other Officials must therefore avoid both these errors. When making suggestions or advocating any modifications or changes ye must exercise most careful discrimination.

"What is more important than devising schemes of good government is to obtain an individual capable of governing. Given such a person there will be no difficulty in reforming bad methods, while failing him good methods cannot come into operation of themselves. If when judging a man ye do not regard his many shortcomings, or if at the same time ye fail to take note of the one pre-eminent quality he may possess, if ye assume that rigid adherence to the written text implies a faithful discharge of your duties or that a blind following of former precedent is in accordance with rule, then all reforms, whether in the direction of instituting new methods or sweeping away old abuses, will gradually cease to have any good result. Again, if ye entrust the task of carrying out such reforms to officials who are constantly changing, then will ensue an irremediable state of evils such as We at present deplore. The first essential towards removing such evils is the cultivation of a public spirit as opposed to the prevailing self-seeking tendency, and the last desideratum is the discarding of sham and pretence coupled with a resolute resolve to do one's duty in the most efficient manner possible.

"When the new leaf shall have been turned over and reforms introduced, it will be more than ever necessary to select upright and capable men to discharge the functions of office, and everyone, in high places and in low, must take heed to his steps.

"The Empress-Dowager and Ourselves have long pondered these subjects in Our hearts. Now however that matters have reached a crisis, change must take place, and safety and danger, strength and weakness, all depend on how the change is effected.

"Should any hereafter pursue the old courses of callous indifference and perfunctory neglect, confine the discharge of his duties to empty words or seek ease by shirking them, We would point out that the statutes of Government are as yet unrepealed and that no leniency will be displayed in enforcing them.

"This Edict is to be promulgated for the information of all."

CHAPTER IV

MANCHU REFORM MEASURES

ON the 6th of January, 1902, the Court arrived back in Peking. The Imperial progress had been in many respects a novel one. For the first time in history the sacred person of the Son of Heaven, and of that even more august personage, the Empress-Dowager, his masterful aunt, had been entrusted to the railway. An even greater innovation was the removal of the customary injunction laid upon the people to seclude themselves within their houses, that the Imperial personages be not contaminated by even a glance of a common eye. Finally, the Empress-Dowager displayed an affableness to the Chinese and foreigners who, at different points in her journey, chanced in her way, that was as unique as it was interesting.

The general verdict as to these things, however, was that they were merely designed to produce an effect, and despite the indications of an apparent change in the way of looking at things, and the promise of reform, but little expectation of any great improvement was entertained. The astonishment was all the greater, therefore, when evidence began to accumulate that the "Old Buddha," as Tzu Hsi was commonly called in the North, was bent on passing her declining years modernising the old conditions, in the attempt to equip her country with the means to contend with the material forces of the West, and to meet the demands of what would some day be a public opinion, which none foresaw more clearly than she would in the fullness of time refuse to be ignored.

The keynote of her policy was the maintenance of the prestige and position of the Manchu dynasty, and its hold,

unimpaired, on the magnificent inheritance which the great founder of the dynasty, Nurhachi, had won by the sword.

Familiar with history, she began to realise that her House lines were running in the course that had led to the downfall of the once glorious Mings. And there was in the Manchu case an added danger. Of alien stock, they stood for a foreign domination, and had to fear from within as well as from without. When they had subdued China in the middle of the seventeenth century, their campaigns had been characterised by ruthless cruelty. In the East the memory of wrongs lingers with posterity, and hatred of the Manchu conquerors, and the belief that their doom, too, would come, has been a tradition, faint it may be at times, but still a live tradition, of the Chinese race.

Alert of mind, Tzu Hsi recognised the insidious seeds of decay, and realised that the time was come when the effort must be made to save the Imperial clansmen from the effects of their own vicious and narrow lives. And as with unerring instinct she saw the danger, so with a wisdom that was as admirable as it was extraordinary in a woman whose life had been spent behind the impenetrable veil of an Oriental court, she saw that salvation could only come by regeneration from within, and the generous co-option of outside forces to aid a sadly deficient recuperative power.

Actuated by these ideas, she addressed herself, in the first instance, to laying the foundations of a new social structure. Formerly it had been forbidden for Manchus and Chinese to intermarry. Now, not only was the restriction removed, but it was pointed out that the social differences that had rendered it desirable had largely ceased to be, and only good could now result from a fusion of the two races. In short, Manchus and Chinese were urged to intermarry, the only exception being that of the Emperor's wives, who would still be selected from amongst the daughters of the great Manchu houses. In the same Decree Tzu Hsi deprecated the Chinese practice of binding their women's feet, and urged its abolition.

This Decree was issued within a few days of the Court's arrival in Peking. It was followed at a short interval by

an Edict authorising the Imperial clansmen and nobles to send their sons abroad for education.

But the Empress-Dowager did not confine herself to these important innovations. Army reform had already received attention. Yuan Shih K'ai had been promoted early in 1899 to the post of Governor of the Province of Shantung, as a reward, it was said by his enemies, for his services to the Empress-Dowager in the autumn of the previous year. During the Boxer disturbances, his policy of masterly inactivity did much to prevent the extension of the conflagration, and the strength of character which his stern repressive measures indicated marked him out for further promotion. In January, 1901, he was appointed to the important Viceroyalty of Chihli, where, later in the year, in pursuance of the Imperial command, he laid the foundation of China's model army.

Attempts at administrative, intellectual, moral, and political reforms now followed each other in rapid sequence, and showed clearly enough the sincerity of Tzu Hsi's purpose.

To all that was sought to be done, however, especially in the way of administrative reforms, in which may be included the introduction of many of the modern conditions of Western life into the large cities—tramways, waterworks, electric light, telephones—all of which have played their part in the educative process which has been going on, considerations of space prevent more than a passing reference. It is principally important here to recall those attempted reforms which, beyond all others, stand out as cutting right down to the roots of the people's lives and dealing with fundamental things. These reforms may, perhaps, be reduced to three.

The first took place in 1904. By this time the Empress-Dowager had decided that the classical essay system, which Kuang Hsü had sought to abolish in 1898 and she had subsequently restored to its honoured place, must go. It was clearly an anachronism, an opinion in which it seems even the scholarly Chang Chih Hung agreed, and blocked the way in the upward path. The corner-stone in a polity constructed in a less complicated age, it was too important to be ignored, and too antediluvian, it was thought, to



THE FATHER OF THE MODEL ARMY: H.E. YUAN SHIH K'AI WHEN VICEROY OF CHIHLI.

be reformed. Henceforward graduation in the modern colleges would be the passport to official life, and a generation hence the classical writings must have lost their place.

As to the wisdom of virtually ruling out of a nation's life the humanising influence of an ancient literature opinions may differ—similarly as to the justice of such a sweeping change. This is not the place, however, for such an inquiry. Rather, it is important to note that the gates were opened to Western education, while the literati, an honourable and cultured class, seemed, as it were, suddenly to be disfranchised. Under certain conditions it must have been a fertile source of trouble. In practice, however, though there were no more examinations, there were still plenty of places for the classical student and the old style of official, and the intention of the new idea, like many another, was more honoured in the breach than in the observance. And not, perhaps, unwisely so. It was enough, from the point of view of practical politics, that the classical tradition was doomed, and it was but a fair compromise that it must be given time gradually to pass away.*

The second reform was the abolition of the growth, import, and consumption of opium. On the 28th of September, 1906, the drug formed the subject of strong indictment by Imperial Decree.

"Since the restrictions against the use of opium were removed, the poison of this drug has practically permeated the whole of China. The opium-smoker wastes time and neglects work, ruins his health and impoverishes his family, and the poverty and weakness which for the past few decades have been daily increasing amongst us are undoubtedly attributable to this cause. To speak of this arouses our indignation, and at a moment when We are striving to strengthen the Empire it behoves Us to admonish the people, that all may realise the necessity of freeing themselves from these coils, and thus pass from sickness unto health.

"It is hereby commanded that within a period of ten years the evils arising from foreign and native opium be equally and completely eradicated. Let the Government Council frame such measures as may be suitable and necessary for strictly forbidding the consumption

* The famous Hanlin Academy was still retained, and only abolished by a Presidential Order of June 2, 1912.

of the drug, and the cultivation of the poppy; and let them submit their proposals for Our approval."

The response of the nation to this clarion note constitutes one of the most remarkable moral impulses in history. It has shown the possession of qualities which afford one of the chief elements of hope in China's future. It has resulted, according to the testimony of competent observers, in the country being already at a very advanced point towards being entirely rid of what has been justly regarded as a national curse, and it only now remains for the moral sense which has accepted the prohibition of a drug, which at least gives relief and renewed life to weary frames, to see to it that a worse evil does not take its place.

So much for the reforms in the fields of education and morality. We now come to the third and last great line of proposed reform, the political, with its project for a Constitution.

The history commences with the following Decree, issued on the 16th of July, 1905.

"The present situation is fraught with difficulties, and all kinds of questions are awaiting attention. Frequent Decrees have been issued by the Throne in the earnest desire to initiate reforms and to encourage progress. But though a scheme of reform has been in existence for several years, there has been an absence of any substantial result. This is undoubtedly due to want of thoroughness and comprehension of the objects of the reforms on the part of the officials whose duty it is to put them into effect, and if they are only ostensibly engrossed in their duties, but in reality take no interest in them, what hope is there of bettering our country and saving her from the dangers which threaten? We therefore now instruct Prince Tsai Tse, Tai Hung Tzu, Hsu Shih Ch'ang, and Tuan Fang to visit Japan and Western countries, accompanied by a suitable staff, to study the administration of Government in those countries, and to make a selection of the best points for introduction into China. In the future other batches will be sent, and all who go must show that they deserve Our confidence by diligently making inquiries and carefully considering all matters that come under their notice, in order to be able to advise and assist the Government in the introduction of reforms.

"The defraying of the expenses of this Commission is assigned to the Boards of Foreign Affairs and Revenue."

The Commission started in the following October, but

under somewhat discouraging circumstances. Arrangements had been made for their departure from Peking by special train. As they were about to leave there occurred a bomb explosion. The damage was slight, and only one man was killed. This was one Wu Yueh, the intending thrower of the bomb, on whose person it was concealed at the time it exploded.

The motive for the projected outrage was hard to find, and at that time did not transpire. It now appears, however, that it was directly inspired by the revolutionary organisation, which, satisfied that in Republicanism lay the only hope, frankly desired to discourage any efforts at political reform on other lines.

The Republican party had recently acquired a certain degree of organisation. Since his failure at Canton in 1895, Dr. Sun Yat Sen had been travelling in Europe and America and throughout the East, preaching the gospel of the new principles and gaining many adherents. Nor had others been altogether idle, with the result that there had been a certain amount of revolutionary activity in Shanghai. In 1901 Sun Yü Yün, a well-connected man, who subsequently came into great prominence,* and others, founded the Chung Kuo Chiao Yu Hui, or the Chinese Educational Society, expressly designed to cultivate anti-Manchu sentiment. In the following year, through the same agency, what became known as the Anti-Russian Society was formed at Tokio. The object of this last combination was to arouse protest against the Government policy in Manchuria, and so indirectly to attack the dynasty. For a time both these societies were very energetic, putting forth their propaganda through the medium of the *Su Pao*, a newspaper published in the vernacular in Shanghai. The suppression of the *Su Pao*, however, and the Japanese discouragement of the activities of the Chu O Ta Hui, as the Anti-Russian Society was called, interposed a temporary check. But it was not for long. During this period large numbers of students, at an age that is receptive of ideals and full of youthful enthusiasms, were passing each year into the Universities of Japan, and becoming imbued with

* Under the Republic he became, by popular acclamation and the choice of the leaders, Military Governor of Anhui.

advanced ideas. Among them there sprang up various minor societies representative of the many shades of opinion which of course existed. But in 1905 it was agreed to merge their different creeds and combine to form a new party, pledged at all costs to reform. In this new combination the earlier Shanghai organisation was also absorbed. At this juncture Dr. Sun Yat Sen arrived in Japan, and a meeting of welcome to him was made the occasion of the inauguration of the united party.

The meeting had taken place in Tokio on the 13th of August, 1905, and it is from this time that the Republican party, as an organised body, under the name of the T'ung Meng Hui,* or the Sworn Brotherhood, dates.

It is of interest to observe in passing that the Decree sending Imperial Commissioners abroad was issued more than a month before this time, so that it may be fairly reckoned to the credit of Tzu Hsi that her action was inspired by her own desire to carry out, step by step, her clearly expressed intention and not dictated by any warning note this meeting might be said to have struck.

The Commissioners, to whom we must now return, though undoubtedly shocked by Wu Yueh's unseemly demonstration, were not delayed. About a year later they arrived back in Peking, after a highly agreeable experience of travel, and duly reported the results of their observations. Their conclusions, it will be seen,

* The revolutionaries have frequently, and perhaps more generally, been alluded to as the Ko Ming Tang, as though this were the name of their organisation. It was, however, only the somewhat contemptuous appellation applied to them by the Government, the character "Tang" having a slightly sinister meaning as of a gang or combination of persons almost involving the idea of conspiracy. The term "Ko Ming" appears in the Chinese classical writings, and conveys the idea of "altering the course of destiny" in the sense of a change of system. It owes its modern application, in the first place, to its use as a term conveying the idea of revolution in translations of Rousseau's works, writings with which Young China is very familiar; while in the second place it was adopted as the title of a celebrated revolutionary pamphlet called the "Ko Ming Chün," or the "Revolution Army," written by Chou Yung, a scholar of Szechuen. This book was published about 1903, and though promptly suppressed attained a considerable vogue.

were of a somewhat complimentary nature to foreign institutions, which took upon themselves something of a Utopian character, in some cases perhaps not quite easily recognisable.

In due course the report of the Commissioners was acknowledged by an Imperial Decree of the 1st of September, 1906. This document, which contained the first definite promise of a Constitutional Government, was in the following terms:—

"In obedience to the instructions of Her Imperial Majesty the Empress-Dowager, the Emperor issues the following Edict: Ever since Our Imperial House began to rule this Empire We have ever had the best interests of the people at heart and have always taken up anything that at the time seemed advantageous to Our subjects. At the present day We hold relations with the various nations of the earth and learn that there is among them a mutual interdependence on and with each other, and this leads Us to consider Our position, which seems pressing and fraught with danger, unless We seek for wise and experienced men to assist Us in the Government of the Empire. For this reason We sent a special mission of high officials to visit various parts of the world to inquire into the system of government there. Our High Commissioners, Duke Tsai Tse and his colleagues, have now returned from their travels, and in all their reports to Us they are unanimous in the declaration that the main cause of the backward condition of this Empire is due to the lack of confidence between the highest and lowest, between the Throne and Ministers and the people. Indeed, officials know not how to protect the people, while on the other hand it follows that the people are ignorant of how to guard the safety of the country. Foreign countries really become powerful by granting a Constitution to the masses and allowing universal suffrage. Thus the interests of the Throne and the people are the same and what affects the one will also affect the other. The people of foreign countries elect their elders to rule over them. The powers of each are clearly defined and the methods of obtaining funds for Government purposes are properly regulated. Everything is controlled under a proper system which aims at the welfare of the people at large. As for Ourselves, it is necessary to make a careful investigation into the matter and prepare Ourselves to imitate this Government by Constitution, in which the supreme control must be in the hands of the Throne, while the interests of the masses shall be entrusted to their nominees chosen by their suffrage. This, it is to be hoped, will be the means of strengthening the foundations of an everlasting Empire. But up to the present no method of procedure has been drawn up, while the understanding of the masses is very limited. Any undue haste shown in the introduction of these reforms will in the end prove so much labour lost. How can We then face Our subjects under such circumstances and how regain their confidence and faith in Us? It is incumbent upon us therefore as a

beginning to reform the official system, next, to revise the laws in their most minute details, and promote and encourage universal education, regulate the finances and the sources of revenue, reorganise the army, and establish a strong gendarmerie throughout the Empire. The gentry and people will then understand the kind of government needed for the country and be prepared to start the foundations of a Constitutional Government, while the officials of all classes, in Peking and elsewhere, will use their best endeavours to bring Our desires to a triumphant conclusion. In a few years' time, when a rough outline of what is needed has been made, then will the time come to appoint a day for the inauguration *de facto* of a Constitutional Government. The whole Empire will then be notified of the fact. We would therefore earnestly exhort the Viceroys and Governors of Our provinces to issue proclamations to the people exhorting them to show a desire for education, to be loyal and patriotic, to sacrifice for the good of all, and to refrain from destroying a grand structure through petty strife and private quarrels. Let all observe law and order and prepare themselves to enjoy the solid advantages of a Constitutional Government. This is Our sincere hope and desire. Let this be made known to all."

The first step towards carrying out this programme was the issue of a Decree on November 6th following remodelling the Administration of the Central Government. At the same time reference was made to the creation of a deliberative assembly called the Tzu Cheng Yuan, a species of Senate, which was to provide a training ground for the new parliament. By a further Edict, dated September 20th, 1907, Grand Councillor Sun Chia Nai and Prince Pu Lun were appointed Presidents of the body which was thus to be called into existence, with instructions to draw up in conjunction with the Grand Council regulations in regard to its formation and procedure.

A month later, on October 19th, 1907, the establishment of Provincial Assemblies was also decreed, with power to discuss provincial affairs, pass resolutions, and submit them to their respective Governors for approval and execution. But as in the case of the Tzu Cheng Yuan, the Assemblies were to be merely deliberative or consultative bodies with no powers of legislation. They were to be nothing more than the medium for the expression of public opinion and debating schools for the legislators that were to be.

In the meantime the Commissioners, who had been abroad for the purpose of studying the constitutions of foreign countries, had occupied themselves in the leisurely

consideration of a scheme for Constitutional Government in China, and the framing of the principles which would in course of time control the relationship of sovereign and subject.

The task was not an easy one. Her Majesty Tzu Hsi was quite willing to go down in history as the originator of a social compact which should inaugurate a new era, wherein the people should be happy and prosperous and the country strong and secure in the blessings of peace. But on the other hand, as the point was approached for the great Imperial concession, she could not bear to see herself surrendering that supreme authority which from time immemorial has been the characteristic of autocratic rule. In her idea of the new scheme of things the sovereignty would continue with the Emperor, not reside in the people.

In these circumstances the documents which were intended to form the Great Charter of Chinese Liberties were somewhat at variance with generally accepted ideas on the subject of Constitutional Government.

The scheme of the Commissioners was divided under four headings—the Sovereignty of the Emperor, the Rights and Duties of the Subject, Parliament, and Elections.

The second of these sections was satisfactory in that it clearly secured to the people the fundamental rights of freedom of speech and freedom from imprisonment or punishment without trial by competent judges in accordance with the law. Similarly the election regulations, if they were slight and left the position a little vague in the important matter of voters' qualification, nevertheless, as an expression of general principles, were not inadequate.

When we come to the questions of Sovereignty and Parliament, however, it is a somewhat different story. As under the British Constitution, Parliament would initiate legislation and its proposed measures would only become law on receiving the Imperial sanction. But there the resemblance ended. There was no intention to allow the term "*le Roi s'avisera*" to fall into disuse, and the Royal Prerogative was very amply protected. In the first place it was specifically enacted that the Ta Ch'ing or Great Pure Dynasty, the dynastic title of the reigning

house, "would rule for ever and ever and be honoured through all the ages." To this, of course, there could be no serious objection. At most it need only be regarded as a concession to Imperial prejudices. But the conclusions that seemed to follow from it robbed the Parliament of its independence and deprived it of much of its utility. The Emperor alone was to have power to make laws and to decide what matters should be put before Parliament for discussion. The Emperor would convoke, prorogue, suspend, or terminate Parliament. The Emperor alone would have power to appoint officials and to dismiss them. The Emperor would have sole power to administer the law and appoint judges. Finally he would be free, subject to certain very slender restrictions, to supplement the law by means of Imperial Decrees.

The Edict which accepted these proposals was issued on August 28th, 1908. It emphasised the aspect of the matter which has been just described. "The important point," ran a significant passage of the Imperial utterance, "is that there should be no departure from the many Imperial Decrees already issued, and that the supreme authority should continue to be vested in the Sovereign, whilst the people should have the right to deliberate on public questions. In founding a system of Constitutional Government, inaugurating a Parliament, and arranging the methods of election, this guiding principle must always be kept in view, that the authority of the Throne still retains its full effect and cannot be encroached upon in the smallest degree."

The proposals of the Reform Commission also included an elaborate scheme for educating the country up to the point where they would be ready to enjoy the blessings of such a beneficent regime as is here indicated, and remodelling the administrative system to meet what would then be the State requirements. These, too, met with Imperial approval, and it was decreed that all preparatory measures must be completed by the ninth year from the then date —1916—when a Constitutional Government would be proclaimed and a Parliament convened.

With this position the Empress Dowager seems to have been thoroughly satisfied, and she looked forward hopefully to a new era in which she would play no small part in

shaping the destinies of the New China. And certainly in a sense substantial progress had been accomplished. If Tzu Hsi had refused to limit the monarchical functions she had, on the other hand, promised enfranchisement to the subject, and admitted the principle of discussion of the nation's affairs, a concession that could only have the ultimate result of curtailing the Imperial Prerogative. For it provided that opportunity for abstract discussion to which reference has already been made, and which cannot be too strongly insisted upon, as such an important factor in a nation's political progress.

It is probable that had the "Old Buddha" lived, on the foundations which were thus laid would have been constructed the fabric of the modern State. It is true that by this time the revolutionary party had greatly increased in strength. They had established an official organ, called the *Min Pao*, or the *People's Paper*, the first number of which, published by Sun Chiao Jen,* had appeared on the 26th of November, 1905. In the course of the three years which followed their influence had spread very rapidly.

Nevertheless, at this time it constituted but a small amount of leaven in the huge Chinese body politic, and in order that its influence might be broken or its growth at least checked, the Chinese Government induced the Japanese Government to bring pressure on the revolutionary organisation, with the result that after a time their journal was suppressed. Thereupon the leaders left Japan and went to Singapore, where it was said poverty involved many of them in great distress.

This was in the autumn of 1908, and it seems reasonable to suppose that had any real endeavour been made to follow out the course now laid down there would have been no revolution. The spirit of the Empress Dowager, however, was greater than her strength, and on the 15th of November, 1908, she "passed beyond." The ill-starred Emperor Kuang Hsü had already "become a Guest on High" at five o'clock in the evening of the previous day.

According to the Edict that was issued in the name of the new Emperor, Kuang Hsü's nephew, a child of two

* A true reformer. Mr. Sun subsequently became Minister of Agriculture and Forestry in the Republican Government.

years, Pu Yi, the Empress-Dowager had for some time been ill, when "unfortunately, owing to her sorrow at the death of Kuang Hsü, her sickness increased and her spirit was handed to Heaven." Thus must the proprieties be satisfied.

Other accounts had it that her end had been inevitable, and that the Emperor was hastened on his long journey in order that Tzu Hsi might be in a position to settle the question of succession, which though already determined upon in theory might yet be a source of trouble. Finally, it has been recorded by the historians of her life and times * that she died quite unexpectedly while she was still looking forward to a career of usefulness and activity during the long regency which the adoption of a child of tender years would necessarily entail.

The death of Tzu Hsi resulted in a great change in the persons of the play. In the first place, the reins of Government fell to Prince Ch'un, brother of the late Emperor and father of the Emperor Pu Yi, and the Yung Lu Empress-Dowager, the childless widow of Kuang Hsü and niece of the late Empress-Dowager, Tzu Hsi. Secondly, it involved the downfall of Yuan Shih K'ai. According to the great biography on which we have more than once relied, Kuang Hsü had in his last hours drawn up a rough holograph will:—

"We were the second son of Prince Ch'un when the Empress-Dowager selected Us for the Throne. She has always hated Us, but for Our misery of the past ten years Yuan Shih K'ai is responsible, and one other" (the second name is said to have been illegible). "When the time comes I desire that Yuan be summarily beheaded." †

Yuan at this time was a member of the Grand Council and the most influential Chinese in the Empire. Up to 1907 he had been Viceroy of Chihli, with the control of the flower of China's new army. But it would almost appear as though he was thought to be becoming too powerful: at any rate the Empress-Dowager saw fit to call him to higher things. Apart from this, however, the change had been a wise one.

* "China under the Empress-Dowager," J. O. P. Bland and E. Backhouse, p. 460.

† Ibid., p. 460.

Yuan Shih K'ai had always stood for progress on sound and moderate lines, and his elevation to the Grand Council had brought to the councils of the nation a great accession of strength. His reputation also stood high with foreigners, and especially with the diplomatic representatives of the foreign Powers.

Unfortunately, the Regent, who himself had no love for Yuan Shih K'ai, could not be induced to take the higher and more patriotic view and subordinate personal feeling to State requirements. Though he dared not venture on the literal fulfilment of his brother's wish, he decreed the downfall of this eminent man in terms which Yuan could not easily forgive, and of which the Regent himself was destined painfully to be reminded :—

"The Grand Councillor and President of the Board of Foreign Affairs, Yuan Shih K'ai, was chosen by His late Majesty to fill many high posts, and upon Our accession to the Throne We conferred further signal marks of favour upon him, in the belief that he possessed abilities which would enable him to render good service. He has now, however, been seized with a disease in the feet which makes it difficult for him to move about and thus renders him unfit for the performance of his duties. We therefore Decree that as a mark of compassion he shall forthwith vacate his posts and retire to his native place for the purpose of treating his complaint." *

Except for this retrograde move, affairs of state for a time were not unpromising. Prince Ch'un had travelled abroad, and was of not unprogressive mind. Furthermore, he was strongly prepossessed in favour of the policy of Constitutional Reform, and continued to work out the programme which had been laid down.

On the 14th of October, 1909, the Assemblies met in each provincial capital, and the dignity and decorum, generally speaking, which characterised their proceedings did much to impress on observers the sincerity and soundness of the leaders of provincial thought. It was not long, however, before the freedom in exchange of ideas engendered by debate, and the confidence in themselves which they rapidly acquired, suggested to the members of the Assemblies that the time had now arrived when a Parliament could and should be convened. In December, 1910,

* Cf. Chapter XI., *post*.

over fifty delegates from various provinces in China met in Shanghai, and after due consideration proceeded to Peking with a view to presenting a memorial.

The reply of the Prince Regent was contained in a somewhat lengthy Decree, the reasoning of which is contained in the following phrases:—

"Our Empire is extensive in area, and as neither the preparations are complete, nor the people's standard of intelligence uniform, should a Parliament suddenly be opened, it is anticipated that opposition may be rife, which will hamper the progress of Constitutional Government. Should this happen, not only shall We be unable to satisfy the spirit of the late Emperor in Heaven, but it will be open to question whether the representatives, who present this petition, can face Our four hundred million brethren.

"We wish to exhibit absolute sincerity and to hide nothing. In short, Constitutional Government will certainly be established, and a Parliament will be surely opened, but what is to be carefully considered is the question of time and order. As safe gait is essential in a long walk, so is it unwise to look for immediate results in attempting an important task. Provincial Assemblies have been opened in all the provinces, and the National Assembly will be organised next (Chinese) year; thus the basis of a Parliament will be complete."

With this reply the provinces, protest as they might, had for the time being perforce to be content.

On the 3rd of October, 1910, the Tzu Cheng Yuan, or Senate, met for the first time in Peking. It was opened by the Prince Regent in person, who in the form of an inaugural address delivered the following admirable sentiments:—

"From the time of Our assumption of the Regency under the Imperial command, the situation has been beset with difficulties and day and night are fraught with alarm.

"All the Princes and Ministers are whole-heartedly united in the endeavour to fulfil the valedictory admonitions of their late Majesties to make preparations for the orderly introduction of the details of Constitutional Government. We cannot adequately express our gratification at being able to be present in person to witness the inauguration of the now established Senate. At the present time a great and universal struggle for the progress of civilisation is taking place. At its inception every important measure for the establishment of a State rests on the thoroughness of Government and the perfection of legislation; still more does it rest on the joint aid afforded by the wholehearted harmony and sympathy of all classes.

The Senate is the place for the representation of public opinion. All its members enjoy the confidence of the Throne and advancement to position by the voice of the masses. They must be able to exert to the utmost their most genuine effort to join in assisting the national aims, and in expanding the benefits of Constitutional Government, and to serve as a pattern for the Parliament. They should glory in this splendid measure which has hitherto never existed in China, and hope truly for unlimited benefit for the advancement of the State.

"This must be the object aimed at by all its members."

Simultaneously the child-Emperor was made to issue a Decree in which he called upon the members to "cleanse their minds of prejudice and cultivate public spirit, that they might show their loyalty to the Throne and discharge their responsibilities to the people."

It was not long, however, before the members of this body in their turn addressed themselves to the burning questions of the early opening of Parliament and the formation of a Cabinet. In due course the Throne was memorialised, the memorial being backed by a telegraphic communication from the Governors of provinces. By a Decree of November 4th issued in reply the Regent, who began to realise the insistent nature of the demand, reduced the period of probation by three years, involving the formation of the Cabinet at a relatively earlier date. The Parliament would therefore come into being in 1913.

The Edict which made this concession was of great length and traversed well-worn ground. Once more the dangers of haste were deprecated, an argument which, sincere though it may well have been and thoroughly well-founded, sounded in the people's ears as a mere excuse for deferring their enfranchisement. The scheme of administrative changes and the educational programme were, of course, to be modified, while the Edict concluded with the pious hope that there might be "a successful consummation at the appointed time, giving repose in Heaven to the spirit of the late Emperor, and on earth satisfaction of the importunate hopes of the People within the Four Seas."

On the same date a further Edict was issued in sterner terms:—

"Imperial Directions have now been given that the time when the Parliament shall be established shall be the fifth year of Hsuan T'ung

(1913). The Ministry of the Interior and the Provincial Viceroys and Governors shall now firmly instruct and order the representatives of the provinces at once to disperse and return to their own homes, each following his calling in peace, and quietly awaiting the arrangement of all details by the Throne. Such is the Imperial Command."

But still it appeared that neither the Senate nor the country at large was satisfied. On November 9th the Senate submitted another appeal for the opening of Parliament, and again took up the matter of the immediate formation of a responsible Cabinet, to the latter point more especially devoting their attention. In the course of the vigorous campaign which then ensued they even went the length of impeaching that venerable body the Grand Council, first collectively and later on individually, and so strenuous was their onslaught that the most pachydermatous of officials began to experience an uneasy sensation. Early in December the Grand Councillors, who had no mind to be made responsible for their actions to the Tzu Cheng Yuan, resigned. Their resignations were not accepted, but the Senate had made one of their points. In an Edict of December 25th the Throne conceded the immediate formation of a Cabinet, and ordered its constitution to be framed forthwith. In the meantime the campaign for the earlier opening of Parliament had been attended with less successful results. Though in various large centres the most serious demonstrations took place, the Government stood firm on the position indicated by the Imperial Edict of November 4th, which has already been referred to. Beyond that point the Throne refused to go, contenting itself with instructions to the Commission of Constitutional Reform to draft without delay the modifications in the original scheme involved in the curtailment in time which had been effected. And here the Senate and the country had for the present to let the matter rest. Public Opinion, or what passed for Public Opinion, was strong, but as yet the arm of the constituted authorities was stronger still.

CHAPTER V

THE POLICY OF CENTRALISATION

PERHAPS the most noticeable, and probably by far the most important, characteristic of Chinese internal politics in recent years has been the growth of antagonism between the provinces and the Central Government. Nor should it be matter for surprise that it should have arisen. The time must come in the growth of all nations when the relative advantages and disadvantages of centralisation and decentralisation have to be considered in relation to the requirements of Government and a country's needs. It was inevitable in China, especially in view of the circumstances of the adoption of Western methods and the spirit of independence of thought which was beginning to permeate an important section of the people, that the question should arouse deep passions.

One of the earliest manifestations of this antagonism, and one more easily followed by the foreign observer, was the so-called "Rights Recovery" movement, with its cry of "China for the Chinese." This, though primarily perhaps the outcome of anti-foreign sentiment, rapidly became the plank on which to base those criticisms of Central Government methods to which men were beginning to find courage to give expression. It was loudly proclaimed that the Peking bureaucracy had sold, and was daily selling, the birthright of the people to foreigners, who were enabled to acquire their interests, irrespective of the merits of their schemes, by illegitimately smoothing their path with the officials with whom they had to deal.

As is the way with such criticisms and protests, some frequently contained much justice; others, on the other hand, were sometimes far from fair. Similarly they were

often honest, but it may not be denied that it was not unknown for them to be tainted with self-interest.

That injustice and self-interest should at times be more than noticeable was inevitable and natural. It need not alienate sympathies. What is more difficult to sympathise with, and where the provinces made their mistake, was in the adoption of an attitude of unreason. And if at the moment the motives of "Young China" are and must for some time be scrutinised carefully, and their protestations accepted with caution, it will be largely due not only to the spirit which originally inspired the "Rights Recovery" movement, but to the methods it employed to work its will. Not content with urging the adoption of a new policy as regards future concessions and the terms of admission of foreign capital, they resorted to every means in their power to cancel existing rights, or by a process of obstruction to render them of such little value that ultimately perfectly valid foreign interests could be, and in fact were, redeemed on Chinese terms.

From the Chinese point of view, and this is not the place to discuss it from a foreign standpoint, this action paralysed the hands of the Central Government and prevented the development of new enterprises on legitimate and useful lines.

In the matter of railways, around which the ultimate battle was destined to be waged, the Central Government succumbed comparatively early. In 1906 the Hankow-Canton trunk, which had formerly been proposed as the subject of American finance, was, on the urgent advice of the Viceroy of Hukuang, Chang Chih Tung, handed over to the provinces concerned. Similarly with the important trunk that was to open up the Province of Szechuen and bring that distant region into commercial relations with the outside world on a scale commensurate to its potentialities. The sanction of many other provincial schemes followed.

It is true that the Tientsin-Pukou loan was put through and acquiesced in during 1908, but it was only because the negotiations had progressed too far for them to be broken off. Similarly in the case of the Shanghai-Hangchow-Ningpo railway, which it had been agreed in 1898 should be financed by

the British and Chinese Corporation, the Central Government had no alternative but to conclude a loan in fulfilment of their long-standing obligation. When the time came, however, to undertake the work of construction under the superintendence of foreign engineers, in accordance with the terms of the loan contract, local opposition was so strong that the project as a Central Government undertaking had to be abandoned and the work of construction undertaken as a provincial enterprise.

It was not long before the unwisdom of the policy thus forced upon the Central Government became manifest, and in 1909, seeing that in three years virtually no progress had been made on the Canton-Hankow trunk and the Szechuen line, Chang Chih Tung entered into a preliminary contract with a group comprised of British, French, and German financiers to provide the funds and technical supervision required for their construction.

The effect of this action was twofold. On the one hand it evoked a grave provincial protest, and on the other it brought American financiers into the field with a claim to participate on the ground of an earlier understanding with the Chinese Government in the event of foreign money being required in Szechuen.

The adjustment of the difference between the foreign interested parties occupied some considerable time, but eventually, in May, 1910, a settlement was arrived at, resulting in the formation of the now well-known Quadruple Syndicate. Negotiations were then resumed with the Chinese Government.

In the meantime Chang Chih Tung had died, and in his valedictory memorial had again emphasised his conversion. "The Canton-Hankow and Szechuen-Hankow railways," we read, "being of the utmost importance at the present day, these lines should assuredly be undertaken by the Government with a view to their speedy construction."

It was not till the early part of 1911, however, that anything tangible was accomplished. At that time Sheng Hsüan Huai, better known as Sheng Kung-pao, had recently been called to the position of President of the Board of Communications.

Sheng, whose portrait may yet be remembered in the

Academy of 1907, was a sound business man and a capable administrator. In the course of his long career he had occupied many positions of great importance. To mention a few of the fields of his activities, besides holding numerous purely official positions he had also administered the Telegraphs, controlled the China Merchants' Steam Navigation Company, and occupied the position of director-general of various railways. He had risen in 1901 to the height of Junior Guardian of the Heir Apparent, from which was derived his title of Kung-pao.

Unfortunately H.E. Sheng bore a somewhat indifferent reputation as regards honesty, and was highly unpopular with a large section of his countrymen, who regarded him and his associates as rapacious and entirely unscrupulous, preying upon the people and using their position in the Central Government to the advancement of their private ends. It is probable, however, that a prejudice which it is to be feared had become almost traditional blinded his critics to Sheng's finer qualities, and prevented a just appreciation of his aims and ideals. It is probable also that, whatever reproaches he may have merited in the earlier stages of his career, they were due in respect of what have not unusually been regarded in China as venial sins. Nor was there now any necessity for their continued practice. Sheng was an immensely wealthy man. In years he approached, if he had not already exceeded, the allotted span. He had performed many and great services to his country in the domain of commerce and industrialism, and conceivably he, whose experience in such matters was so much more considerable than that of other men, was honestly set on performing some last service which should stay the process of disintegration that threatened.

But however this may be, and it is not likely to be a very popular view, Sheng Kung-pao had the courage to formulate a sound policy which could only prove unpopular. And in justice to him it must be reckoned to the credit side of his account, for it is not to be supposed that he failed to foresee the nature of the opposition it would arouse, though he badly misjudged its strength. The Tzu Cheng Yuan in their first session had demanded the right to consider and sanction all proposed foreign loans before they were con-

tracted for. The practical application of Sheng's ideas could only produce an immense outcry throughout the country. He saw, however, that only the successful consummation of his plans in the course of a few months could protect them from interminable delays. That section of the Tzu Cheng Yuan which represented members from the provinces would never have had the courage to approve large foreign loans, and in the meantime the needs of the country must be neglected.

Broadly speaking, Sheng Hsüan Huai had two principal aims—to reform the currency and to bind the provinces together by means of railways.

In pursuance of these ideas a contract was made with the Quadruple Syndicate in April, 1911, for £10,000,000, mainly intended for currency reform, but including £3,000,000 for the development of industries in Manchuria.* The operation aroused great criticism in the provinces, but before it had had time to manifest itself seriously, the Hukuang loan, which came much nearer home to the people, was concluded and the storm broke.

The way had been paved on the 9th of May by a declarative Decree, which, in the flowing periods in which the benevolent intentions of the paternal Government were wont to be conveyed, laid down the new policy. The Decree was in the following terms :—

"The Ministry of Posts and Communications report that they have acted on the suggestion recently submitted to the Throne by the Censor Shih Chang Hsin, that a distinctive method should be adopted of dealing with trunk lines and branch lines of railway. This suggestion was a very satisfactory one in view of the extended nature of China's frontiers, which stretch for many thousands of miles in all directions, enclosing a vast space which would require many months of travel to compass.

"The Throne is full of solicitude for the defence of our frontiers, seeking day and night to exercise proper control, and we find that the speedy construction of railways represents the only means to attain this end. Moreover, conferences on matters of government, the conduct of military operations and the transport of produce are all dependent on

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* With a view presumably to disarming Japanese criticism a small loan of Yen 10,000,000 had been placed with the Yokohama Specie Bank in the previous month, which was expressed to be required for the purpose of "redeeming a loan item and for the Government Railways."

facility of communication, which is thus a first essential in our desire for progress.

"As a result of earnest consideration we find that the country must have trunk lines throughout the length and breadth of the land in order to enable the Government to be carried on and a firm grip to be kept on our territories.

"Formerly the matter was not properly thought out, and there was no definite method, so that throughout the country lines were built at random. No difference was made between trunk and branch lines, and the capacity (or otherwise) of the people to build was not taken into account; it was sufficient for any one to present a petition and a permit for private construction followed as a matter of course.

"Nevertheless, though many years have passed, we find to-day that Canton has raised half its share capital, but has not constructed many miles of railway; Szechuen has lost much of its funds, which impeachment and prosecution have failed to recover; Hunan and Hupei have had a railway bureau for many years, but have nothing to show for their squandered funds. Thus have the resources of myriads of the people been lost through waste or embezzlement. The longer this continues, the greater will be the people's loss, high and low will suffer harm, and evils unthinkable will result.

"Therefore be it specially and clearly proclaimed for the information of all that all trunk lines belong to the State by a formal Ordinance of the Government. All trunk lines for the private construction of which Provincial Companies have been founded before the present year, and which have all been delayed, are to be taken back by the State and immediately completed.

"Branch lines may still be constructed by merchants and people according to their capacity, but with the exception of these the permits formerly issued for the construction of trunk lines are to be cancelled. Let the Ministries of Finance and of Posts and Communications decide on the detailed method of taking back the lines in question—in obedience to this command—and submit the same for Our approval as soon as possible.

"The Ministers of State concerned should not hesitate and repeat the mistake previously made.

"Should there be any who without regard to the public interest deliberately interfere with this railway policy or stir up strife and resistance, let them be treated as rebels.

"Let this be notified to all."

The receipt of this Decree in the Province of Hunan was the signal for instant protest. The shareholders apparently were sufficiently content with things as they were, and had no desire either to be saved from themselves or from the wasteful methods of those responsible for the control of the enterprise. So strong did the feeling rapidly become that the Governor, Yang Wen Ting, felt constrained to send

a private telegram of warning to the Board of Communications, which throws an interesting light on the conditions prevailing in the province.

"The issue of the Decree handing over the railways to the Government," ran this document, "has occasioned great indignation among the masses, and the whole body of the people are raising a clamour. Every day meetings are being held to discuss the situation, at which most violent speeches have been made.

"It is impossible to reason with the people or to prohibit their meetings by force. I have done my best to admonish the people, and have agreed to memorialise on their behalf praying for the Imperial clemency, and have warned them against rioting. At the present moment they have dispersed, but it will be difficult to appease them finally. The people of this district are of an excitable nature, and in last year's riots bad characters recklessly stirred up trouble in a moment. Again, there has just been trouble at Canton, where the strictest precautions had been taken, and I very much fear lest advantage should be taken of this to meditate trouble here. If crowds collect and utter threats, they will drag with them the lower classes, and pretexts will be seized to create a disturbance, which will certainly cause a great calamity.

"I, Wen Ting, am charged with the duty of preserving the province, and I am really unable to face such a responsibility. When the various representatives have presented their petition I shall proceed to state the real facts to the Throne in a clear memorial.

"I propose now to ask your Board, as a first step, to telegraph to the railway companies instructions couched somewhat on the following lines :—

"'Substantial sums have been collected by your companies, thus showing how enthusiastic the merchants are over the matter. It is necessary then that everything should go on as before, and no special officials or engineers will be appointed. As regards the future, it is necessary to wait for the Director-General to advance or stop the work as he sees fit, in order to secure uniformity of gauge.'

"In this way we shall pacify people's minds, for, no

matter whether these railways are managed by the officials or the merchants, they are all State-owned.

"At the present time the people are in a very angry state, and the only thing to do is to try to arrange a compromise and to accomplish one's aim gradually. If any hasty action is taken a serious calamity will at once ensue. Matters are very critical, and I therefore send you this secret word in advance for you to prepare some arrangement. I earnestly beg you to send me an immediate reply. For the rest, I am reporting in detail by letter."

The reply to this communication was conciliatory in tone, but firm. It was pointed out that it was not necessary for the companies interested to stop work, or that the change in policy involved dispensing with the services of those who were already employed. The recovery of the trunk lines for the State—in other words, the imposition of State control—was done "with the object of securing the welfare of the people and a definite and uniform plan of operations." The details still remained for joint discussion and subsequent settlement.

A telegram in similar terms was also addressed to the Viceroys of the Liang Kuang, at Canton, and of Szechuen.

On the 18th of May an Imperial Edict appointed his Excellency Tuan Fang Director-General of the Canton-Hankow and Szechuen-Hankow railways. On May the 20th the Quadruple Syndicate signed with Sheng Hsüan Huai, acting under the authority of an Imperial Edict, the contract for the Hukuang loan.

As its name implies, the proceeds of this loan, subject to deduction of a sum approximating £550,000 for redemption of bonds formerly issued by the American China Development Company in connection with the Canton-Hankow railway, were to be devoted to railway developments in the Provinces of Hunan and Hupei. In other words, the Hukuang sections of the line, which is ultimately to connect Canton with the capital, and of the important trunk destined to open up Szechuen, appeared to be at last within measurable distance of construction. The loan was for an amount, in the first instance, of six million pounds sterling, at an annual interest of 5 per cent., increasable by the issue of a second series for an amount not

exceeding four million pounds sterling in the event of the proceeds of the first series proving insufficient for the stated purposes, and the Imperial Government failing to raise funds to meet the required balance from their own resources. With the other terms of the loan, which were, generally speaking, more favourable to China than any railway loan yet concluded, we are not here concerned. Interesting as are all these matters, with all that they imply, unless our narrative is to exceed all due bounds, there is no alternative but to confine ourselves to the inquiry as to the state of feeling in the country.

This, it must be recorded, did not grow less strong. On the contrary, conditions of great seriousness were rapidly created in the Province of Hunan. By the 31st of May local action had called forth the following Edict:—

"Yang Wen Ting memorialises that the Provincial Assembly of Hunan has petitioned stating that the Hunan people were quite able to construct their own railways, and did not wish to contract any loan. He has therefore memorialised in accordance with their wishes.

"The Government policy has already been definitely announced, under which the main railway lines become State-owned. Moreover, the system of 'rent shares' in vogue in Szechuen and Hunan has been entirely stopped by our order, and instructions have been given for satisfactory arrangements to be made with regard to shares which have already been collected. All this has been done because the operation of main lines by merchants had merely served to increase the sufferings of the people, and because Our object was to lighten the burdens of Our poor subjects. In changing the Government policy We cannot allow any loss to fall on them, and they should have been filled with rejoicing on this account. How is it then that there is this opposition?

"The Provincial Assembly misunderstood the situation, and many of the statements in their petition are quite inaccurate, while their attitude is tantamount to a threat.

"Yang Wen Ting, as a local official, is charged with the responsibility of suppressing trouble and pacifying the people. If, after the former clear Edicts had been issued, he had shown his sympathy with the Throne's love for the people by earnestly explaining to them the real state of affairs, all suspicions would have been dispelled. But instead of this he recklessly memorialised Us on behalf of the Assembly just after We had definitely fixed the Government policy. Such conduct is, indeed, improper. We hereby order that he be severely reprimanded. Yesterday We again issued a Decree commanding the cessation of all taxation levied on rice, salt, and houses for the construction of railways in Hunan. The Throne has thus spared no effort to show sympathy with the hardships of the people. The said Governor is hereby ordered to adhere strictly to

the frequent Decrees issued on this subject, and at the same time to give earnest advice to the people, and in concert with them to devise a satisfactory procedure. Should bad characters secretly incite the people to create trouble, the former must be severely punished. If he again fails to adopt proper measures and serious trouble occurs, he, the Governor, will be the one held responsible."

In the meantime Canton and Szechuen had protested in even more strenuous terms. Though they were not concerned as provinces, as far as the introduction of foreign money was concerned, their railways or projected lines had also been expressly earmarked for State or Central Government, as opposed to provincial, enterprise and control. These protests evoked equally stern rebukes.

It has been suggested in some quarters that this provincial attitude was mainly attributable to the hostility and distrust excited by the Sheng oligarchy, as Sheng Kung-pao and his associates have been called, and represented a protest against the methods proposed for acquiring the interests of shareholders rather than a challenge of the principles at stake. It is true the feeling against Sheng was undoubtedly strong, but the methods proposed for redeeming the enterprises did not appear, theoretically at any rate, to be open to objection. The situation was a highly complicated one. The methods of raising money had been diverse. Apart from deriving capital in the normal way by voluntary subscription, special railway taxes had been imposed locally, principally on rice and salt, while landowners had been compelled to subscribe for shares varying in number in proportion to the area of their holdings. These latter were known as rent-shares in contradistinction to, though enjoying the same rights as, the shares subscribed by merchants.

By these means not inconsiderable sums had been raised. But much had been frittered away, and here again another distinction involving difficulties arose. As the Board of Finance put it in a lengthy memorial on the whole question, "the chief difficulty was that the conditions in the four provinces (*i.e.*, Kuangtung, Hunan, Hupei, and Szechuen) were quite different, and malpractices had not been carried out to the same extent in all." Proposals by the Board then followed for compensating the shareholders, in part immediately and in part ultimately, the basis of the Board's proposals being

the principle that " to nationalise the railways without ultimately paying back every cent of the share capital would inevitably destroy the Government credit."

These proposals, after being briefly summarised, were approved in the following Decree :—

" The Tu Chih Pu has presented Memorials setting forth detailed particulars for resuming the ownership of the Szechuen-Canton-Hankow trunk lines. The nationalisation of railways has the double object of protecting the railway administration and showing sympathy for the distress of the people. Some time ago We issued decrees putting an end to the collection of subscriptions for railway shares in Szechuen, Hunan, and other provinces, and have repeatedly ordered that satisfactory measures be devised to deal with the amounts already collected. Now, according to the Memorialists, it is suggested that the shares in railway companies subscribed by the four provinces Kuangtung, Szechuen, Hunan, and Hupei be all examined and taken over by the Government in exchange for special Government railway bonds, which shall be issued by the Tu Chih Pu and the Yu Chuan Pu, and bear interest at the rate of 6 per cent. per annum. In the future all surplus profits will be divided among the bondholders according to the number of shares they have. Bondholders who wish to recoup their capital may do so after the lapse of five years by fifteen yearly instalments, but before the instalments are due the bondholders may at any time borrow money from the Ta Ch'ing Government Bank or the Bank of Communications on the security of the bonds in accordance with the banking regulation. Those who are not willing to surrender their shares in exchange for Government railway bonds are allowed to settle the matter in a different manner so as to show equity."

The Decree then proceeded to distinguish between the various railways and to differentiate between the forms of share subscription.

" The Kuangtung railway shares have been subscribed entirely by the mercantile community, and there has been great extravagance of expenditure occasioned by delay in construction. Consequently the shares are at a discount of more than 50 per cent. But now it is proposed to make a generous repayment of 60 per cent. of their original value in the first instance, and, in order to show special consideration, Government bonds bearing no interest will be issued for the remaining 40 per cent. When the railway is completed and has begun to pay, the bondholders will be allowed to recoup the remaining part of their capital from the surplus profits in ten annual instalments. The Hunan railway shares subscribed by merchants are to be paid in their full value. As regards the other shares that have been raised by rice subscription, rent subscription, &c., Government guaranteed interest-bearing bonds will be issued in exchange

for them. Hupei railway shares are also to be paid in their full value. The railway funds which have been expended in connection with famine relief are to be treated in the same way as the Hunan rice subscription. The sum of four million and several hundred thousand taels spent on actual materials for the construction of the Ichang section of the Szechuen railway will be made good by the grant of Government guaranteed interest-bearing bonds. It is optional on the part of the shareholders whether the balance of over seven million taels is to be employed for railway shares or for the promotion of the industries in their respective provinces. As these suggestions are satisfactory, We hereby command the Director-General of the Canton-Hankow and the Szechuen-Hankow railways to proceed at once to his post and act in concert with the Viceroys and Governors of the said provinces in carrying out the scheme as suggested, and in making a careful and detailed investigation of accounts. In this matter the Throne has exercised its discretion so as to combine justice with benevolence. After this determination, if any person be found to make railway matters a pretext for inciting the people to create a disturbance, the said Viceroys and Governors should mete out the severest punishment to him without any leniency being shown, that peace and order may be maintained."

In view of the complicated nature of the situation, and of the fact that each one of these railway companies was virtually bankrupt, and in any Western country must have gone into liquidation sooner or later and realised for the benefit of shareholders but a fraction of the amount subscribed, the Government proposals appeared to be not only reasonable but generous. The only substantial objection that could be made to them in practice lay in the doubtful value attaching to a Chinese Government bond in the hands of a Chinese subscriber. In these days of Provincial Assemblies and a Senate in Peking, however, it was not such a strong objection as it would have been formerly, and from a business standpoint, as an alternative to a certain heavy loss, it had much to recommend it. Certainly this was so as far as Kuangtung, Hunan, and Hupei were concerned. In Szechuen there was, as will have been noticed, a fundamental difference in the method of treatment. There the position appears to have been that the shareholders had subscribed, or agreed to subscribe, an amount of capital approximating fourteen million taels. Of this amount seven million taels was assumed, on the strength of a memorial of the acting Viceroy, to be available in the coffers of the Szechuen Railway Company either for subscription to

Government bonds, industrial needs within the province, or even for return to shareholders. It is more probable, however, that this sum had not yet been called up; but in any case the Government had not to consider anything beyond the amount up to this time actually absorbed, whether by the railway work or dishonest and wasteful administration.

Of this latter sum, which amounted to Tls. 7,000,000, nearly half had been swallowed up in the disastrous Shanghai rubber boom, through the speculations of one of the managers, and proceedings had failed to recover any portion of it. The Government did not propose, however, to shoulder the burden of this item, confining the amount of compensation to the sums supposed to have been spent on the undertaking. This latter, by means of a very liberal calculation of the value of the modest amount of work which had been accomplished, were placed at the substantial figure of Tls. 4,000,000.

It thus came about that the net position of the shareholders in Szechuen was to receive back in Government bonds something more than half the amount in hard cash actually subscribed, whereas in the neighbouring provinces Government bonds were to be issued to the extent of the total amount subscribed.

The whole question is very involved, but it seems tolerably clear that the people of Szechuen had no one to blame for their misfortunes but their own managers, and that the differentiation of their case was not an unfair one. Certainly the Government conditions could not account for the trouble which ensued, or so have stirred up the province to united action. They might assuredly aggravate the discontent, but they did not represent its cause. The issue in truth remained the issue of the past few years, that of the Central Government against the provinces, of the point where provincial control begins and Imperial control ends.

The question was, would the people yield? It was certainly to be hoped that ultimately they would, or at least that some satisfactory compromise would be arrived at. The advantages that accrue from local government in many departments of national life require no demonstration. But the matter of railways is not one that can be so dealt

with. In China, for reasons which will readily occur to those at all familiar with the conditions, nothing but a strong central administration can deal successfully with the railway problem. It is too interdependent on the several provinces to admit of separate provincial control. For once, at least, the Imperial Government had taken up a stand which in principle was thoroughly sound. The long-standing conflict with the provinces had been brought to a head on an important point. The question of the nationalisation of railways had become a test case.

But the Government stand had come too late. Provincial feeling was too strong to yield at the Imperial command. When it was seen that the people's protests, made in the first instance by petition to the Viceroy, Chao Erh Feng, and through Chao Erh Feng by memorial to the Throne, only evoked a strongly-worded rebuke in the form of a further Decree, the opponents of the Government embarked on a policy of passive resistance. Shops were closed, employees struck, students refused to attend the schools and colleges, payment of taxes was refused. In other words, normal life was entirely suspended and a dangerous condition of affairs created. As all attempts to secure a return to the normal by reasoning failed, the Viceroy caused certain arrests to be made of men who were reputed to be the ringleaders of the movement. This immediately became the signal for a change of tactics. Passivity gave place to action, and a severe attack was made upon the Viceroy's yamen, which was with difficulty repulsed by the Imperial troops.

This was on the 7th of September. What quickly became known as the Szechuen Revolt had commenced. It rapidly assumed amazing proportions. Ere it was finished the sincere and able Tuan Fang was destined to lose his life at the hands of his own soldiers. The Viceroy, Chao Erh Feng, was to be murdered at Chengtu, and many another official was to suffer a like fate, while one of the fairest of China's provinces was to be ravaged by the devastating agencies of fire and sword.

CHAPTER VI

PUBLIC OPINION IN 1911

THE first session of the Tzu Cheng Yuan came to an end on the 11th of January, 1911. By this time the strain between the Central Government and the provinces was great. On the one hand the Senate had freely transgressed the limits which had been set for its discussions, and had sought to arrogate to itself almost the powers of Parliament. The Central Government, on the other hand, had not acted unreasonably. In response to the popular demand they had ultimately yielded to the extent of halving the period of probation remaining before granting a Parliament, and agreeing to the formation of a Cabinet, a proceeding which it seemed should have satisfied all reasonable persons.

The matter, however, had ceased to be one of reason. Given certain conditions, when a force has been set in motion it gathers strength as it goes, in accordance with the natural law. Only a stronger force can control it. In China, for the first time in history, the people, wisely or unwisely, had been endowed with an articulate voice. The floodgates had been opened, but with the death of the late Empress-Dowager the strong hand had been removed.

The situation would have been an immensely difficult one for an old and experienced ruler, and the Prince Regent was neither of these things. On the contrary, he had shown himself weak and had surrendered to the pressure of his environment. He had allowed himself to prefer Manchus and ignore the claims of the Chinese. Princes of the blood had assumed positions of political prominence which had formerly been denied to them. The many schemes of reform, involving such things as the laying of a foundation

for the navy, the erection of costly buildings, and generally the meeting of the material side of the demands of progress, had opened the door to corruption on a scale that had never before been practised. As we have seen, the policy of centralisation was construed into an attempt not to weld the country together in the bonds of an honest and strong administration, but to drain the life-blood of the nation for the benefit of those in high places. Finally, if the people had been slow to believe that the old Empress-Dowager was sincere in her programme of reform, public opinion was now convinced, rightly or wrongly, that every vestige of Manchu sincerity had long since disappeared.

The Republican party—that is to say the followers of Dr. Sun Yat Sen—had long believed that in the expulsion of the Manchus lay the only hope of true reform, and they had been determined for many years on bringing about the downfall of the dynasty. In this respect they were confessed extremists of the most uncompromising type, and were not open even to consider any alternative. It is certain, however, that a wise and moderate course of reform under the Manchus, had such a thing been possible, would have been best for the country, and it is probable that had such a series of reforms been effected and their fruits brought within the appreciation of the people, the influence wielded by the party of Sun Yat Sen would have been largely discounted. It is possible even that it might have been diverted, and, seeking the way of least resistance, have gone with the stream.

The element essential to a successful realisation of such a possibility, however, was sincerity; and though the Regent himself may have been sufficiently well-meaning, his counsellors, behind the promise of reform, were felt to be evading the just demands of the people.

In the year 1911 the feeling which for lack of a better term must be called Public Opinion expressed itself frequently and vigorously in favour of the immediate convocation of a Parliament, and in many parts of the country very extreme methods of protest were, and for some time past had been, habitually resorted to. In China it has always been an honourable and effective measure of revenge, or for calling attention to official improprieties or the exist-

ence of grievances, for the injured or protesting to commit suicide with due solemnity and adequate prominence. It is the supreme test of sincerity. The protagonists of the new ideas, without going the length of surrendering their lives, threatened it many times, and in the meantime backed up their threats by the mutilation of ears and fingers, the writing of memorials in blood, and so forth—as unpleasant a method of reasoning to foreign ideas as from the Chinese point of view it was cogent.

The Constitutional agitation, as distinct from the questions centring in the Hukuang loan, was of rapid growth, and seemed to the superficial observer to attain very considerable proportions. Nor was it decreased when in the middle of the year the new regulations for the Tzu Cheng Yuan, which had been promised, or perhaps it would be more correct to say threatened, were promulgated by Imperial Edict and found to involve a substantial curtailment of the privileges which during the opening session that body had in practice enjoyed. Nevertheless, it is certain that the agitation was in fact on a very much lesser scale than at first sight appeared, and it is necessary to make some sort of examination of the meaning of the term Public Opinion as applied to China, and as to its state immediately before the outbreak.

It has been shown that the intellectual and political conditions of the country until very recent times were those of remote antiquity. Of the 400,000,000 which constitute China's population merely a fraction of 1 per cent. could either read or write. Scarcely a larger proportion had travelled beyond their provincial boundaries.

But missionary, and not least medical missionary, effort, the opening up of foreign trade with distant points in the interior, travellers, the introduction in some parts of the railway, the establishment of a cheap and effective postal service, modern schools, the reform Decrees of Kuang Hsü, the more recent pronouncements of the late Empress-Dowager, the immense growth of the Press and the comparative freedom of its utterances,* the doings of the

* This was no more strongly illustrated than during 1911 in the series of brilliant articles which appeared in the *Min Li Pao*, published in Shanghai. This paper was under the able editorship of Sun Chiao Jen,

Provincial Assemblies—all had combined, without perhaps changing the people, gradually to accustom them to the idea of change. It is a process that has probably gone deeper and had more considerable consequences than is generally supposed. Moreover, the struggle for existence in China is very keen. There is always, especially in the neighbourhood of the great towns, a large population on the verge of want, which at least has nothing to lose and may gain something by change.

The stimulative effects of the war with Japan have already been referred to, and in the same connection the spectacle of a modernised Japan defeating a great Western Power in 1905 must not be overlooked.

An even greater preparation for change has been the immense burdens under which the country has long groaned. The reparation exacted after the Boxer troubles, though no doubt attributed to foreigners, had also perhaps in a measure begun to be recognised as among the results of indifferent government. Other taxation too was increasingly heavy, and the people, in particular the merchants, were tired of endless impositions. Just as at other crises in the long course of China's history, when the limit of endurance had been reached, the people rose in their wrath in response to the call of some new leader and overturned their oppressors, so now the country at large was thoroughly discontented and neither unready nor averse to change.

All these things, however, were in a sense mainly negative. By themselves they were not as yet strong enough to form what could be called a public opinion among the masses, and that which people were wont to call Public Opinion, with its so frequent and ferocious demonstration, resided not with the many but with the few. These few were in the main the gentry and the students.

To refer to the latter first, it will be remembered that the T'ung Meng Hui had been founded in Japan in 1905, with its frankly revolutionary aims and its watchwords, "The People's Voice, the People's Authority, and the People's Prosperity." In the students abroad Dr. Sun Yat Sen saw

to whom reference has already been made, and who has played a part in the progressive movement that is scarcely appreciated by those who only look on the surface of things.

the material for the regeneration of China ready to his hand. It was then that the policy was deliberately embarked upon of freeing the country by means of its youth, who after the completion of their education would return home and, taking up official positions, teaching in the schools, joining the army or entering into business life, would exert their influence over those with whom they were brought into contact.

It is difficult, in fact impossible, to estimate the number of such men who in the intervening years have returned to China, but in relation to the population they must be considerably less than a small fraction of one-tenth of 1 per cent. Nevertheless they have exercised an immense influence. In the first place the system of family makes for the increase of the extent of individual influence. And secondly, they are so scattered throughout the country and so filled with enthusiasm that they have made great numbers of converts, especially in the schools and colleges, and also in the army, though of the latter at this time necessarily but little was heard. *

Unfortunately most of the students, especially those educated in China, are young and inexperienced men. In many cases their education is of a superficial order. Their minds are filled with Utopian visions and catchwords, and they are imbued with the ambition to import into China the institutions of other lands, without due regard to her peculiar requirements.

That section of society, on the other hand, which is not too happily described by the term "gentry," represents those persons who by education, birth, or wealth have attained locally a certain position and celebrity. They are a product or an extension of the communal system to which reference has already been made, and custom has long assigned to them a considerable say in provincial affairs. Con-

* A definite policy, initiated by Sun Yü Yün, who has been already mentioned (*vide ante* p. 41) was embarked upon for undermining the loyalty of army officers and securing their conversion to Republican ideals. Sun himself became very active in this connection at Nanking, but was captured towards the end of 1906, and only the influence of his uncle, Sun Chia Nai, the Grand Councillor, saved his head. Sun was released when Hsuan T'ung came to the throne, but a colleague, Hu Yung, who was captured at the same time at Wuchang, was not so fortunate, remaining in prison till released by the revolutionaries in October, 1911.

sisting as they do of literati, successful merchants, and prominent landowners of the province, they represent perhaps the nearest approach to public opinion, and on the whole might be expected to be of conservative tendencies.

The influences, however, which have prepared the minds of lesser men for change had operated in many instances to produce in this upper stratum of society aspirations towards political reform. Moreover, of recent years the students have been industriously at work amongst them, with the result that in many provinces they are largely converts to the new ideas.

Such were the elements into which, apart from the official classes,* the population of China in 1911 might have been resolved. There was the huge mass of easily governed people, who only ask for stable conditions under which to till the soil and ply their trade, passively alive to the possibilities of change, but entirely ignorant of distinctions in political institutions. There were the gentry, in many instances scarcely less ignorant and frequently allowing themselves to be dominated against their surer instinct by the advocates of a new political order. There was a large section of army officers of progressive views. Finally, there was the young and active student, idealistic and generally honest, waiting for the opportunity to move and to put into practice those theories of novel institutions which he already saw in imagination resulting in a model State.

* The official classes contained a number of men of progressive views, notably in the persons of students of an earlier generation trained in foreign schools, a considerable proportion of whom might be relied upon when the time came to throw their influence on the side of progress.

CHAPTER VII

THE OUTBREAK AT WUCHANG

THE state of the country in the early part of 1911 determined the leaders of the new principles of political thought to bring about a rising at an early date. It was felt that the time had come when a resolute movement would compel the adherence of the country at large and encompass the downfall of the existing regime. Anything like a universal plan, however, in the sense of concerted action throughout the provinces, was felt to be impossible. In the first place, the greater the number of persons in possession of the details of the scheme the greater the risk of discovery with its resultant failure. Again, the conditions in the various cities differed so considerably that it would be impossible to foresee all contingencies. Finally, the difficulties of communication in a country of huge distances, where the telegraph and postal communications were under Imperial control, made it impossible to adopt any general plan, since at the eleventh hour it might require to be altered in some material particular.

In these circumstances it was decided that the rising should take place at one point, adherents in certain other centres being warned to hold themselves in readiness for the outbreak. When it occurred, which might or might not be on the arranged date, as local circumstances should finally dictate, they were to be guided in their individual action by the measure of its success and their own opportunities for effective co-operation.

This plan had much to recommend it. It was not to be assumed that the proposed attempt would necessarily be the successful one, and, if not, it would probably be regarded as merely a local or sporadic outbreak if confined to one or

two centres, whereas an unsuccessful effort on an extended scale would afford the authorities the opportunity for crushing much of the life out of the movement, striking at several points at once, and setting it back for several years. In the event, as will be seen, the wisdom of the controlling minds was more than justified.

The plan ultimately decided upon was for a rising to take place at Canton. If successful, Nanking and Wuchang and the principal cities of the Yangtze Valley from Shanghai to Changsha would immediately follow. Other places, where the revolutionary committees and influence were not so strong, must be left to chance and the condition of local feeling at the moment. The date fixed upon was the 29th day of the third moon, corresponding to the 28th of April.*

It is now matter of history how the rising at Canton took place and was shortly crushed, its only result being the killing by bomb of the Tartar General, Fu Chi, a harmless old gentleman of agreeable presence and dignified mien, whose only offence was to be born a Manchu and to represent a hated order.

With the failure of this attempt the leaders had to commence their preparations for a further effort, which it was decided should be made towards the close of the year at Wuchang. Once more, however, Fate interposed her hand, this time causing the outbreak to come before its time.

Pending the arrival of the appointed day,† the trusted

* The statement has been made, adding a picturesque touch, that the date was chosen in compliance with an old prophecy contained in the Shao Ping Ko of Liu Po Wen, no ordinary diviner, whose writings five centuries ago have been interpreted as having foretold the end of the Mings, the coming of the Manchus, and their subsequent decline and fall.

† As an illustration of the loosely-knit nature of the revolutionary organisation and the uncertainty and secrecy attending their plans, it may be mentioned that a prominent revolutionary, a friend of the writer for many years, now holding high Government office in Peking, gave the date as the 19th day of the ninth moon (November 10, 1911), a very propitious day according to the meaning ascribed to the Shao Ping Ko. Another equally reliable and presumably well-informed authority, who was one of the leaders of the movement and subsequently became Military Governor of a province, informed the writer that the rising was to take place on the first favourable opportunity that occurred in the 10th moon, the first day of which would correspond to the 22nd of November.

agents of the revolutionary party at Wuchang had their headquarters at a house in the Russian Concession at Hankow, where they were engaged in the business of manufacturing bombs. Suddenly in the afternoon of the 9th of October an explosion occurred and betrayed the nature of their occupation.

In the raid which followed a few arrests were made, while the premises were found to contain bombs already made, bomb-making materials, revolutionary pamphlets, flags, white sleeve badges, maps of Wuchang, plans for allocating positions for attack on the city gates, and, lastly, a long list of names which appeared to be the members' roll.

The leaders of the party, two men of the name of Sun Wu and Liu Kung respectively, both contrived to escape arrest. The former, placed temporarily *hors de combat* by having part of his face blown off by the explosion, was privately removed by friends and treated until well enough to resume his active labours. The latter, fortunately for the revolutionaries, was still free to act and alive to the needs of the situation. He saw clearly the dangers of delay. It is true that the revolutionary preparations still lacked that completeness at which they aimed. Nevertheless they were well advanced, and the disadvantage of anticipating the course which had been determined upon was more than off-set by other considerations. The conditions that make for successful action against the established order of things are mainly surprise and spirit. In times of trouble the constituted authorities have an immense advantage. They can move openly and act entirely as circumstances may dictate, especially in a country where there are no niceties of judicial process and vengeance is swift and sure.

On the other hand, those in revolt can only co-operate secretly. They run the immense risk of having their organisation broken up in detail, and their plans fail through the misunderstanding which is so frequently attendant on secretly concerted action. Finally, once the relentless hand of Government is at work dealing out retribution the spirit of the weaker brethren fails, for it takes a stout heart to resist the spectacle of captured

comrades being hurried away on their long journey to the "Yellow Springs."*

The circumstances of the present capture and the extent of the exposure which must ensue left the revolutionaries with no alternative but to strike at once, and to strike hard. Consequently, Liu Kung placed himself in communication with the soldiers—members of that Model Army, the long designed instrument to work the revolutionary will, and by a strange irony destined to play so great a part in securing the downfall of the Imperial House. In pursuance of the revolutionary plans they had for long been the object of solicitude, especially during the past year, and were now agreed to strike a blow. Liu Kung urged that the time had now arrived, and that they must rise that night if they would save the situation. But through misunderstanding, lack of nerve, or some other cause, the rising did not then take place. In the meantime the Viceroy and the officials at Wuchang were busy making arrests, the clue to which had been found on the Hankow premises.

Of the persons arrested, some thirty in number, three were executed outside the Viceroy's yamen as the dawn broke next day.

When the night passed without incident, Liu Kung, full of anxiety for his wife and brother, who had been arrested and were still under examination, and in despair for the cause, once more got into communication with the soldiers, without whom he was powerless. This time he was successful in inducing them to move, pointing out that therein lay their only hope of safety. The list of revolutionary adherents had been found on the Hankow premises, he declared, and it was only a matter of hours before they would be hunted down.

The rising was fixed for midnight, but apparently the soldiers were impatient to begin, or saw their opportunity earlier. At any rate they started about eight o'clock, it then being the evening of October 10th.†

* The "Yellow Springs," also known as the "Nine Springs," is the Chinese equivalent of "the undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveller returns."

† This date, by some curious chance, happened to correspond with the 19th of the Chinese moon, and therefore, in accordance with the Shao Ping Ko, was of happy augury.

Despite the fact that the outbreak was premature by a matter of some weeks, the occasion of the rising was not inopportune. As has been seen, the large and populous province of Szechuen was in revolt. A substantial body of troops had been withdrawn from the Hupei command to deal with the disturbance, and was out of reach of the provincial authorities. Again, the Provinces of Hunan and Hupei were ripe to rise in arms in protest against the Government railway policy. Finally, a large section of the army was at Yungpingfu, in the north-east of Chihli, for the autumn manœuvres, a circumstance which, though favourable to the Imperial cause, in the sense that it meant that the troops were on a war footing and ready for instant mobilisation, afforded the incalculable advantage attaching, at such a juncture, to an opportunity for the exchange of views between officers of revolutionary convictions.

But if the time was not inopportune, neither did the base of operations leave anything to be desired. Situated on the south bank of the Yangtze, and almost exactly in the centre of the eighteen provinces, Wuchang is a great walled city of nearly 500,000 inhabitants, the riverine port of a rich hinterland. Opposite, on the northern shore, are the two cities of Hanyang and Hankow, the former famous for its great arsenal and iron and steel works, the latter at present of necessity content to be the fourth Treaty Port of China, but destined for greater things. Hanyang and Hankow, in their turn, are separated by the Han River. "The Three Cities," as they are called, together form a great emporium for the central provinces. Assuming the revolutionaries to succeed in establishing themselves on both sides of the Yangtze, arms, ammunition, commissariat, and a sympathetic country on which to draw for recruits—in fact, a valuable instalment of the necessary ingredients of a successful campaign—were already assured. Not only so. Such a successful movement in the heart of the country must radiate strong influences and inspire the revolutionary brethren in other centres to submit their lives and fortunes to the touchstone of success and forthwith raise the standard of revolt in the sacred cause of political liberty.

The details of the outbreak will never perhaps be coherently and at the same time conclusively told. The

Republican view is frankly to the effect that in the circumstances of the rising there could have been no successful consummation had the Viceroy, Jui Ch'eng, been a strong man. Their experience at Canton in the spring must, they say, have been repeated. Of the 8,000 troops in Wuchang they could rely on less than 2,000, and the bomb explosion in Hankow on the previous day had given the authorities ample warning. Apart from this, it had been well known for months both to the Viceroy and to Chang Piao, who held the Hupei command, that sedition was rife amongst the troops, and some considerable time earlier a series of measures, which, however, had not proved particularly effective, had been initiated to check its growth.*

It is possible that this explanation is no mere Republican boast. Certainly the course of events showed that once the outbreak had occurred at no stage was any real resistance offered.

On the other hand, it is equally possible that the soldiers were converts to revolution in far larger numbers than has been admitted. It must also be remembered that those pledged to revolt had the immense advantage of being imbued with one idea, and knew on whom they could rely, while those who remained loyal had no means of telling who were with them and who against. Finally, at best they were a faint-hearted band, with no great sense of loyalty, and at this time in a state of considerable discontent.

On the same side of the account it is but just to mention that Jui Ch'eng, in the course of his career, had shown himself not lacking in many of those qualities that go to the making of men. Amongst many he had earned the reputation of being one of the most competent of provincial officials. Nor was he without experience. He had an intimate knowledge of the Yangtze Valley and of the fierce anti-dynastic sentiment which prevailed. A Manchu himself, doubtless he could scarcely have failed to realise all that the loss of Wuchang must mean to the ruling House, and it is but reasonable to suppose that he would have resisted further had he not imagined that resistance would be in vain.

* So much was admitted by Jui Ch'eng in his memorial to the Throne reporting the outbreak; *vide* Chapter IX.

The actual outbreak seems to have run on the following lines. About eight o'clock the troop of Engineers forming part of the 8th Regiment delivered an attack upon the camp outside the city. For a time some resistance was offered. The other regiments, however, were for the most part half-hearted, and soon realised that they were faced with an organised movement. Within half an hour the barracks fell, the still loyal troops taking refuge in flight, while the rest threw in their lot with the revolutionaries.

The attention of the revolutionaries was next directed to the Viceroy's yamen and other important vantage-points.

The Viceroy's yamen seems to have been defended by a loyal regiment of cavalry. But after a time, the resistance offered here ceased to be of a serious character. According to his own statement, the Viceroy had early made up his mind that the situation was not only desperate, but hopeless; and hardly had the attack commenced, when he and his family are said to have fled to the protection of a gunboat lying in the river.

Details, unfortunately, are lacking of the events of the eventful night, but imagination pictures something of the circumstances of the Viceroy's flight. One can see the once powerful satrap, a few hours ago the ruler over two vast provinces, shorn of his pomp and magnificence, surrounded with but a handful of faithful retainers. Face to face with Death, before whom all men stand equal, imagination conjures up the few hurried preparations, the departure by some unaccustomed door, the hurried flight through the narrow streets of the city. From the rear would come the sounds of the pandemonium which still raged, all around would be the apprehensive quiet of a great populace, all unknowing what the next few hours would bring.

If life counted to him for anything, it was well for Jui Ch'eng that he took refuge in flight. In any case, he could not have defended his yamen. It is true that so long as the defending force made a stout resistance, and it remained a matter of street fighting, a considerable attacking force could be kept at bay; but with the artillery in rebel hands, it could, at best, only be a case of hours. The whole of Wuchang is dominated by Serpent Hill,

which rises in the centre of the city itself, and the hill had early been occupied by the revolutionary guns.

As to what would have been Jui Ch'eng's fate had he remained, there can be no manner of doubt. The revolutionaries, with their blood aroused, were in no mood to spare Manchu man, woman, or child. The word had gone forth to wipe out the hated race. Once inside the yamen, a search was made for the Viceroy and his entourage from which there could have been no escape. The maze of courtyards was overrun with rough soldiery. The private apartments of the man who, but a few hours previously, had held over them the power of life and death were invaded by an infuriated mob seeking an unreasoning vengeance. The sack was complete. The buildings were in part destroyed by fire. In Wuchang the old order had passed away.

The rout and flight of the Imperial authorities represented a great triumph for the revolutionary cause. But many and grave difficulties were ahead, heavy burdens on the youthful and inexperienced shoulders of Liu Kung and his associates. The principal difficulty, or at least the one that loomed nearest, was the question of the control of the soldiery. They had tasted blood, and were already engaged in that fierce Manchu hunt which formed such a blot on the revolutionary cause. It might be assumed that an indescribable course of loot and rapine must ensue if the strong hand to which they were accustomed, just now withdrawn, was not soon reasserted. In the emergency they turned to Colonel Li Yuan Hung.

Li Yuan Hung was in his forty-eighth year, and held the position of Colonel of the 21st Mixed Brigade, under the general command of Chang Piao. A Hupei man, he had been educated at the Tientsin Naval College, whence he had been drafted into the fleet, serving under Admiral Sah. At the close of the Japanese War he was employed by Chang Chih Tung, the Viceroy at Nanking, on fortification works. A little later, he went to Japan, with the object of undergoing a practical training in military life in one of the Japanese corps. Upon the completion of his education he again joined Chang Chih Tung, this time in Hupei, where the Viceroy had now been transferred.



BARON FENG KUO CHANG, THE VICTOR OF HANYANG.



GENERAL LI YUAN HUNG, WHO ACCEPTED THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMAND AT WUCHANG, AND SUBSEQUENTLY BECAME PROVISIONAL VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE CHINESE REPUBLIC.

During this period Li Yuan Hung performed valuable services in the training of the new army, but despite his efficiency, it is said that General Chang Piao's obsequiousness and ambitions ever gained him the precedence, while Li Yuan Hung could not secure the leading place for which he was so fully qualified. And again, at a later period, when Jui Ch'eng became Viceroy, the wealth and flattery of Chang Piao, according to Chinese accounts, continued to retain for him the premier position, while Li Yuan Hung, the promising and accomplished, was still forced to be content with a second place.

When appealed to in the early hours of the revolution, Colonel Li at first refused the command which was offered him. His caution revolted against a course which his more liberal mind no doubt approved. The revolutionaries, however, neither would nor could listen to a refusal, and he was ultimately forced to consent, under threat of execution should he persist in his present attitude.

Once committed to the cause of revolution, though he may have sometimes been in doubt, he never really looked back. A keen disciplinarian, but just, a man of character and rectitude, with many friends, and enjoying the regard and confidence of his men, the military difficulty was solved, and General Li Yuan Hung, as he now became, soon showed himself one of the party's most valuable assets.

In the meantime, fighting had not been stayed, many of the yamen being attacked and destroyed. The only serious resistance was that made by the Treasurer's yamen, which was defended by a Manchu guard. But in the end this too fell, and Wuchang, for all practical purposes, was in revolutionary hands.

CHAPTER VIII

HUANGTI, 4609

IN anticipation of their success the revolutionary committee had prepared a Proclamation, which purported to be issued by the General of the People's Army early the following day. It was significant of the situation that the General was unnamed, the fact being, as has been seen, that at the time of the preparation of the Proclamation the adherence of Li Yuan Hung had not been secured, and the ultimate leadership was still undecided.

As regards the document itself, though couched in somewhat monotonous terms, it was full of interest.

"I am to dispel the Manchu Government," the unnamed General was made to say, "and to revive the rights of the Han people."

It continued to the effect that those who concealed Government officials, inflicted injuries on foreigners, dealt unfairly with merchants or interrupted commerce would be beheaded. The same fate was also promised to those who gave way to slaughter, burning and rapine, or fought against the volunteers.

On the other hand, those who supplied the revolutionary troops with food-stuffs or ammunition, or brought in recruits from the country, or gave information as to the movements of the enemy, would be rewarded, while those would be regarded as even more meritorious who afforded protection to the foreign Concessions or guarded the Christian churches.

Finally the Proclamation was dated "in the 4609th year of Huangti."

A few moments' consideration of the contents of this document, the main provisions of which have been thus

summarised, reveals many points of interest. In the first place, it is clear that those responsible for the direction of the movement were fully alive to the necessity of avoiding anything which might alienate the sympathies of foreigners or excite their active hostility. The respect which was enjoined under the severest pains and penalties for foreign life and institutions was no doubt also intended to suggest a tolerance and a breadth of vision which would be an augury of happier times, when freedom of intercourse between China and Western nations and the development of the country's vast resources on modern lines might perhaps be free and unrestrained.

The extreme desirability of effecting the projected change at the cost of a minimum of disorganisation of trade and disturbance of the normal conditions of life amongst the people seems to have been equally apparent. The provisions for the protection of commerce and merchants and the express recognition of the sanctity of the home, besides being a sound economic measure, no doubt also represented a serious attempt to secure the goodwill of the people, and to endeavour to anticipate and prevent that wild rush from the arena of war which previous experience no doubt dictated as necessary. At the same time a sensible and humane policy would appeal to foreign sensibilities.

Finally, the object of the movement was explicitly stated at the commencement of the Proclamation, while in its conclusion it was picturesquely hinted.

The revolutionaries aimed to encompass the fall of the Manchu House and to substitute some sort of purely Chinese regime. They fought under the legend found on the cover of the present work, which being interpreted ran, "Destroy the Manchu and Restore the Sons of Han." They seemed to propose to wipe out the pages of history representing the Manchu domination, not, like the French extremists of the Terror, by the foundation of a new era, but by reversion to the earliest point in Chinese chronology. History with China commences B.C. 2205, with the Hsia dynasty. Tradition, however, exclusive of the purely fabulous period, goes back for nearly another seven hundred years, during which the country was ruled by a succession of godlike beings called the

Five Kings, the third of whom, Huangti, or the Yellow Emperor, is ascribed to the year B.C. 2697. Huangti was claimed to be the inventor of writing and of the sexagenarian "Cycle of Cathay." There is also a tradition that he was the first purely Chinese ruler, hence the determination to revert for computation of time to this distant age.

The first day of the new order in Wuchang was occupied in completing the subjection of the city. Though for all practical purposes it was, as has been said, under rebel control by the early hours of the morning, there were still a few loyal troops at different points, while the completeness of the revolution had to be brought home to the people's minds.

There was, however, no serious resistance to the necessary steps. During the night patrols of revolutionary troops had been placed on the walls and guards at the city gates. The artillery had taken up its position on Serpent Hill, as has been already recorded. During the day a few shells were from time to time directed at places which were still nominally outside the rebel control. There was, however, no real opposition, and Li Yuan Hung's orders were strict that the minimum of destruction was to be wrought, with the result that the city itself suffered but little through the change. With the Chinese inhabitants things seemed almost to resume the normal. It was only otherwise with their unfortunate Manchu fellow citizens, who were mercilessly hunted out, whole families of them being ruthlessly destroyed.

This last phase, however, was not immediately or fully appreciated, and the general impression was of well-regulated order.

"As the day dawned," ran the account of a foreign missionary who was in the city, "the fire became less and the morning found us in the hands of the soldiers, all of them wearing white bands on their left arms. But they maintained an air of secrecy, and little could be found out of what they represented. They claimed only to be the Chinese Army. They were patrolling the city streets and maintaining perfect order and assuring everyone of protection, and by conducting themselves in a

most exemplary way they restored great confidence in both Chinese and foreigners. And so we in the American Church Mission were able to proceed with our regular work, and Boone University went on with its classes as usual, as did other mission schools in the vicinity, and so well ordered were the streets that the citizens went quietly about or stood unafraid in their doorways, and the impression got about that the city was guarded by Imperial troops and that the rebellion had been mastered in the night.

"After breakfast I climbed the hill upon which is built the north city wall facing Hankow across the river, and inquired of the citizens gathered there who the soldiers were. They could not tell, so I proceeded along the wall to the Grass Lake Gate, where I mixed with the soldiers and asked questions. They all wore a white towel or any old rag on their left arm, but guarded their talk quite as well as they guarded the city, and I learned little. I found no officers among them and no prospects of any arriving later. The toughest looking of the soldiers, besides carrying a rifle, wore also the finest of the officer's swords and sometimes a revolver to boot.

"No military system was to be detected; the soldiers came and went in the quietest way possible, but no one seemed to be in command; it carried evidences of a well understood scheme to control the city. An artilleryman straggled along after a foot soldier, who might be carrying a fine overcoat which evidently once belonged to an officer, and a cavalryman, known by his short gun, mixed with the crowd of miscellaneous uniforms representing all branches of the city's military service. All pulled together with no detectable cross purpose."

At this stage the military strength of the revolutionary party, or the People's Army, as they preferred to call themselves, may be reckoned at approximately 6,000 trained soldiers. In normal times the Hupei forces consisted of the 8th Division and 21st Brigade, representing a force of 19,000 men, of which about 10,000 were quartered at Wuchang. But some 2,000 of these troops had been dispatched into Szechuen some weeks previously to deal with the trouble there, leaving only 8,000 men in Wuchang. Of

these it has been seen that at the time of the outbreak some 2,000 were confessed revolutionaries. Of the balance nearly 4,000 men threw in their lot on the night of the rising, leaving approximately 2,000, or roughly one-fourth, who remained loyal. Of these a few were killed, but the greater portion made their escape safely across the river to Hanyang. Among those to escape was the officer commanding the 8th Division, General Chang Piao.

The troops which thus formed the nucleus of the revolutionary fighting force were part of that section of the Model Army which had been trained in Hupei for the well-known Chang Chih Tung, the former Viceroy, by German officers, and they were as well equipped and of as high a standard as any troops in the Empire.

For twenty-four hours' work the progress achieved had been as much as the most sanguine of the revolutionary leaders could have hoped for. But the revolutionaries had not only effected military control. They had also secured the complete adherence of the local politicians. In the course of Wednesday, the 11th of October, the Provincial Assembly went over in a body, their President, T'ang Hua Lung, a scholar noted through three provinces, being elected Pien Chi Pu, a high office under the new administration. Hu Yung, the colleague of Sun Yü Yün, and pioneer with him in the conversion of the army, had been released from his long imprisonment and made civil adviser to Li Yuan Hung. By the evening a provisional administration of eight departments was well on the way to being formed.

It was not destined that their progress in the few days following should be more slow. Under cover of night small bodies of the revolutionary soldiers crossed over to Hanyang, and in the early morning of the 12th concentrated on the two great Government industrial institutions—the arsenal with its great stores of arms and ammunitions and a large sum in silver, and the iron and steel works—which quietly passed under revolutionary control. The peaceful occupation of the city followed.

From Hanyang a small rebel force was dispatched across the Han River to take possession of Hankow. No resistance was offered to their landing, nor at any later stage, the few still loyal representatives of the established order in the

"Three Cities" being by this time thoroughly impressed with the futility of attempting to stem the rising tide.

The first act of the rebels was to fire the yamen of the magistrate and of the Customs' Taotai. In the circumstances it seems to have been a somewhat unnecessary act. It had the unfortunate effect of conveying a suggestion to the rougher elements in the city that a course of incendiarism and licence could be embarked upon unhindered. From that moment the unoffending populace were at the mercy of a rapacious mob. The prisons were opened, banks and shops looted and several fires started, involving great loss of property, including the destruction of the Hupei Government Bank, though as to this latter it was claimed that it was fired by Imperial agents in order to prevent the revolutionaries securing the bank funds.

For a few hours it was a serious and anxious time for the foreign inhabitants of the neighbouring Concessions. The city of Hankow is said to have a population of 800,000 souls. The scum of that population was intoxicated with the lust of destruction. The little band of foreigners who control the great trading interests of Hankow, even though reinforced from the foreign ships in harbour, were scarcely adequate to cope with the developments that might possibly ensue.

Nor are the Concessions themselves planned to resist attack. When Hankow was first opened to foreign trade under the treaty of Tientsin, concluded in 1858, the areas reserved for foreign residence were laid out on generous lines. It was as though the pioneers realised something of their destiny, as if they foresaw the time when the "Three Cities" would perhaps be the foremost centre in China of trade and industrialism.

To-day the foreign Concessions have a magnificent water front on the Yangtze of well over two miles. The proportions of their bund and of many of their buildings, despite the fact that, as many think, Hankow is still in its comparative infancy, are worthy of the noble stream they overlook.

But from the defence point of view this same dignity of amplitude involves a corresponding danger. Apart from the long exposed area to the rear of the Concessions there was nearly half a mile on the southern side in immediate proximity to the danger. The British Concession adjoins

the Chinese city, and it need not be supposed that it would escape the lustful eye of a maddened mob.

The danger had not, of course, been unforeseen. As soon as news reached Hankow that Wuchang was in revolutionary hands the alarm bell was sounded. Shortly after five o'clock on the morning of the 11th of October, the foreign volunteers were assembled and the preliminaries arranged for a defence scheme. They were thus prepared as far as possible for any attack. By a curious oversight, however, one of the principal roads on the city side of the British Concession had been omitted from the scheme. As a result things at one moment looked extremely threatening in this neighbourhood. The street was invaded by gangs of rowdies, whose attention in the first instance was sufficiently occupied in the congenial task of holding up the refugees from the now panic-stricken city. Damage to property, however, and in particular to the numerous shops on the street, could not have been long delayed. Fortunately a strong party of volunteers, reinforced with every available man from the British municipal police, was shortly on the scene and managed to clear the street.

Simultaneously looting had commenced at the back of the British Concession. But here too the mob was checked and safety for the time being assured.*

It can scarcely be doubted, however, that the respite would have been only short-lived, had the mob raged unchecked for a night. The hand of destruction must have been laid at least on some parts of the foreign areas. Fortunately the revolutionary authorities shortly restored order. The force which had been sent across to Hankow in the first instance had not been sufficiently large to take over the city and maintain the peace, and it was not till the evening that two battalions arrived and comparative safety for person and property was once more assured.

Thus ended the second day. Only some forty-eight hours had elapsed since the first blow had been struck. Great risks had been taken, but the Goddess Fortune had smiled.

* It is understood that the Hankow Chinese Chamber of Commerce subscribed the sum of two hundred thousand taels (between £25,000 and £30,000) to the revolutionary cause, and took charge of the policing of the city under the Military Administration.

A great stake had been played for and won. Three rich and populous cities now owned the revolutionary sway. A Government had been created. Treasure, munitions of war and substantial resources were at General Li's command. He controlled the destinies of hundreds of thousands of men.

No longer could any serious doubt exist as to the meaning of the events which had taken place. They had passed out of the category of mutinies and riots. The challenge had been sent away to the North, where lay the stronghold of the established order of things. Even to unreflecting persons the tremendous possibilities of the new forces, which had been so long and patiently working beneath the surface, began to be unveiled.

What the issue would be no man could foretell, but many were conscious of the imminence of change. That it would be far-reaching was no less manifest. Whatever fate might attend the revolutionists in the "Three Cities," epoch-making events had already taken place, with consequences that could scarcely be undone. The history of China had entered upon a new phase. In the stately periods of Carlyle, "the Horologe of Time had struck and an old Era passed away."

CHAPTER IX

THE ATTITUDE IN PEKING

THE telegraphic Memorial of H.E. Jui Ch'eng, the Viceroy of Hupei, reporting the discovery of a revolutionary plot on the evening of the 9th of October, was dated the following day. When it was received in Peking is not known for certain, but it was a curious irony that on the morning of October 11th, when Wuchang was flying the revolutionary flag and the Imperial representatives of law and order had for the most part long fled their posts, an Imperial Edict was issued commending the virtues of Jui Ch'eng and the promptitude with which he had crushed the rising. All necessary measures, it was commanded, should be taken to root out the evil, but they should be accompanied by a wise exercise of the Imperial clemency.

"These revolutionaries," ran the Edict, "by planning a great rising in Hupei have shown the utmost contempt for the law. The said Viceroy, in nipping the trouble in the bud and suppressing the disturbance in a moment, has acted with great promptitude. The civil and military officers engaged in the affair have shown bravery worthy of praise.

"We hereby command that the rebels who have been arrested, with the exception of the three prisoners who have been executed, be at once rigorously examined and punished with the utmost rigour of the law. At the same time the local civil and military officers should make a strict search for, arrest, and bring to trial the rebels who are still at large. Further, a notification should be issued to the effect that those who have been forced to join the rebels are allowed to repent and mend their ways. The police as well as the local civil and military officers who have failed to detect the



ADMIRAL SIR CHEN PING SAH, K.C.M.G., COMMANDING THE IMPERIAL FLEET.



GENERAL YIN CH'ANG, THE MANCHU MINISTER OF WAR.

uprising are graciously exonerated from punishment, since they have taken concerted action in securing the arrest of the rebels. The more deserving officers, who have rendered valuable services in this connection, may be recommended for reward, but no recommendations on a lavish scale can be allowed. The other suggestions in the Memorial are sanctioned."

The Edict had hardly been issued when a second telegraphic Memorial was to hand. The capital of the Province of Hupei was in the hands of revolutionaries; in Wuchang the Imperial Writ no longer ran.

The Edict recording the news and detailing the steps to be taken was not published till the following day. It recites the facts so far as they had been reported by Jui Ch'eng, and continues in the old familiar strain: —

"Upon perusing the Memorial we are filled with much surprise. Though the troops and the rebels had been plotting for so long a time, Jui Ch'eng took no precautionary measures, with the result that there has been a sudden uprising, and the provincial capital has fallen into the hands of the rebels. Thus has he ill-requited Our bounty and has neglected the duties of his office, and his punishment must be severe. We hereby order that Jui Ch'eng, Viceroy of Hukuang, be at once deprived of rank, but that he be allowed to atone for his error by meritorious deeds. We therefore order that he act temporarily as Hukuang Viceroy, that We may watch his behaviour in the future. The said Acting Viceroy is commanded to recapture the city immediately, and in case of failure or immoderate delay he will be very severely punished.

"The General Staff of the Ministry of War are also commanded to detail at once two divisions of troops to proceed to Hupei for the suppression of the revolt. At the same time the Admiralty should dispatch additional gunboats under the command of Sah Chen Ping, while Ch'eng Yün Ho should be instructed to take the Yangtze squadron to the rescue without delay. The Minister of War, Yin Ch'ang, is hereby commanded to proceed to Hupei at once with the troops. All the troops in the province, as well as the reinforcements, will be placed under his command. Jui Ch'eng is instructed to co-operate with him in devising

methods for the early suppression of the rebels. The movement must not be allowed to spread."

There is no reason to suppose that the expression of surprise contained in this document was otherwise than genuine. On the contrary, the course of recent events only tended to confirm the fact that the members of the Palace party, with rare exceptions, such as Na T'ung and Prince Ch'ing, whose anxieties were set down to infirmity and increasing age, were blind to the writing which in the opinion of some of the more close observers was already visible on the wall.* Life in Peking had been pursuing the characteristic tenor of its way. In the month of May the so-called Cabinet had been formed in accordance with the Imperial promise. In response to popular demand the historic Grand Council, the ancient "Chun Chi," its name betokening its origin in those distant days when the Councils of the Nation were Councils of War, had theoretically lost its place. For the moment, however, the concession had but little value. It represented little more than a change of name. With characteristic unwisdom the Cabinet had been so constituted that the Manchu element swayed its deliberations, with the result that, as the Chinese in their own everyday phrases freely put it, "only the skin and feathers had received attention," "the head and face alone were changed." Again, as has been already mentioned, the scope of the Tzu Cheng Yuan had been considerably restricted in its new articles of constitution, a proceeding that could scarcely be said to recognise the strength of those modern forces which refused to be bridled by Imperial Decree. Turning from the political to the business side of Peking life, the capital was full of the ministrants to the needs of the process constituting the modernisation of old China—financiers, sellers of warships, sellers of guns of every pattern, and sellers of machinery of every kind. There was a great promise of many contracts, with their customary acknowledgments to those in high places and their numerous satellites under the system which had been such a fertile cause of provincial irritation.

Within the Palace, during the intervals of intrigue and in

* *Vide* "The Doom of the Manchu," by J. O. P. Bland, *National Review*, June, 1911.

distinction to these more material things, the hoary traditions of a bygone age were being faithfully observed. In accordance with ancient custom, the Board of Astronomy had been consulted on the all-important matter of the education of the Emperor, now in his sixth year. In due course the wise men, after consultation with the stars and other occult agencies, had reported that the Imperial studies should commence "at the Hour of the Dragon on the 18th day of the seventh moon," * and so it had been decreed. Then had been selected Imperial tutors, Lu Jun Hsiang and Chen Pao Chen, two elderly pundits, graduates of 1874 and 1868 respectively, men learned in the ancient books, but scarcely equipped to train the mind of a ruler in modern times. The subject of music, too, had received attention. "The Art of Music," it was explained by Imperial Decree, "has close relation to the administration of Government," and in accordance with the Imperial command what was described as "a book of standard form of National Music" had been compiled.

Side by side with these anachronisms the principal business department of State, the Board of Communications, had been busy arranging, for the first time in China's history, an important conference of the chief engineers and managers of the various railways, which was designed to take place in Peking about the middle of October, with a view to discussing standardisation and other questions. Similarly the Board of War, in accordance with the practice of recent years since China has boasted a Model Army, had been occupied for some time with arrangements for the autumn manœuvres about to commence at Yungpingfu.

Such were some of the strangely diverse elements in the conditions of Peking life and some of the more noticeable current events at the time of the outbreak at Wuchang, which seemed to demonstrate its unexpectedness.

But if the rising in the first instance produced a sufficiently genuine surprise, it was one which was destined rapidly to become alarm. The degradation of Jui Ch'eng had been followed by a similar punishment being meted out to General Chang Piao, the Edict being issued on the

* The Ch'en horary division, the period between 7 and 9 a.m. on the 10th of September.

13th of October, the day after Hanyang and Hankow had fallen into revolutionary hands. No mention, however, was made of these important happenings. The revolt was euphemistically referred to as "a mutiny of troops," and General Chang was reproached with the fact that the only fruits of his several years' enjoyment of the Hupei command was lack of discipline and discontent. Nevertheless, he was permitted for the time being, at any rate, to retain his position, with instructions "immediately and mercilessly to suppress the revolutionaries and recapture the provincial capital."

At the same time an Edict was issued cancelling the autumn manœuvres at Yungpingfu.

The number of men at Yungpingfu at this time was estimated at 30,000, comprising two mixed divisions, two mixed brigades, and two cavalry brigades. Fully equipped at every point, they represented, in miniature, a complete army.

In the circumstances the issue of an Edict cancelling the manœuvres was merely a matter of form. Orders had already been given for the dispatch of troops, collected for the autumn manœuvres, to the disaffected area. It was not long, however, before here again fresh cause for Imperial alarm arose. It was early known in official circles that the response to this call to arms had been neither prompt nor enthusiastic. It soon became certain that there was a serious doubt as to the loyalty of the troops, some of whom it was thought inexpedient to attempt to entrain.

It was then that occurred the event which indicated more clearly than anything that had gone before, not only that the situation was extremely serious, but that the Imperial Government had fully realised its gravity. Yuan Shih K'ai, who scarcely more than two years previously had been retired from office, was recalled to power and appointed Viceroy of Hukuang. At the same time Ts'en Ch'un Hsuan, who as Viceroy of Canton had crushed the Kuangsi rebellion of 1905 with merciless severity, even, it was said, drinking with his officers the blood of his victims in accordance with the savage custom of ancient times, was called from his retirement. A former Viceroy also of Szechuen, where his stern nature was well known, he had already been com-

manded to assist Tuan Fang in the task of restoring order. He was now to return to the province as Viceroy and supersede Chao Erh Feng.

The Edict making these appointments was issued on the morning of Saturday, the 14th of October. It was in the following terms:—

"Yuan Shih K'ai is hereby appointed Viceroy of Hukuang and commanded to direct the suppression and pacification of the rebels.

"Ts'en Ch'un Hsuan is hereby appointed Viceroy of Szechuen and commanded to direct the suppression and pacification of the rebels.*

"They are both ordered to proceed immediately to their posts and there is no need for them to come to Peking for Imperial Audience. At the present critical state of affairs the said Viceroys, who have for generations received the Imperial bounty, should be most solicitous for the welfare of the whole Empire and should use their utmost efforts to perform their difficult tasks without persistent refusal. Thus will they act up to their commission.

"When Yuan Shih K'ai and Ts'en Ch'un Hsuan have arrived at their posts, Jui Ch'eng and Chao Erh Feng will hand over their duties."

A further Edict vested the supreme military power in the province in Yuan Shih K'ai.

"Yuan Shih K'ai having now been appointed Viceroy of Hukuang, We hereby command that the military forces of the said provinces as well as the reinforcements from various points be placed under his control and at his disposal. Yuan Shih K'ai is further ordered to co-operate in dispatching military and naval forces under the command of Yin Ch'ang and Sah Chen Ping, and in taking immediate action in coping with the situation with a view to the restoration of peace at an early date."

Thus was taken that first step in the path of humiliation and despair along which the Manchu House was destined so far to travel. The man who had been humbled to the dust was besought to return to office in order to effect the salvation of those who had worked his fall. He was clothed with something of the powers of a military dictator that he might thwart those hostile forces which aimed to destroy the tottering throne of the infant Son of Heaven.

* It may be conveniently noted here that Viceroy Ts'en, who seems to have appreciated to the full the gravity of the situation, procrastinated and in the event avoided going to Szechuen.

CHAPTER X

THE RIVAL FORCES: PRELIMINARY OPERATIONS

THE recall of Yuan Shih K'ai was dictated by three principal reasons. In the first place he was a Chinese as opposed to a Manchu and could command, it was presumed, a large and influential following. Secondly, he enjoyed the confidence of foreigners. Lastly, he was the creator of the modern Chinese Army, and it was believed that he could ensure its loyalty.

It is probable, however, that but for his supposed influence with the army Yuan would not have been summoned back to power at the present juncture. It is true that at an earlier stage his recall would have been both wise and politic. In fact, it had already been urged in Court circles several weeks previously, and informal communications with Yuan had been opened up. Na T'ung, with the concurrence of Prince Ch'ing, had even gone the length of memorialising the Throne on the subject. Both statesmen saw that the country had need of all its strong men, and they realised that though Yuan Shih K'ai did not perhaps enjoy that extraordinary measure of support which foreign observers usually attributed to him, he represented in the stormy summer of 1911 the best hope of harmonising the different shades of opinion.

But by the outbreak of revolution the requirements of the situation were changed. These advantages were largely overbalanced by the disastrous effects which an impression of panic on the part of the Imperial Government must produce. It was probable, too, that the extent of Yuan's influence with what proved to be the irreconcilable elements, from the Manchu point of view, was overestimated. By many of the revolutionaries he was cordially hated, and his

severity had made him enemies in other quarters. For nearly three years he had been out of office. The men who constituted his party had necessarily been forced to make new connections. Finally, the personnel of the army which he had created, and in which he had indubitably aroused a feeling akin to personal devotion, had largely changed. Whether he could command its support was not quite so clear as it had been in 1907, when the Empress-Dowager called him to higher things.

This, however, remained to be seen. In the meantime it was clear that the Imperial Government realised their position, and did not require to have it pointed out to them that in the army lay their chief, if not their only, hope of salvation.

The rebellion was now only four days old, yet much had already been accomplished. It is true that there had been no move northward, but the explanation of this, apart from the fact that it was early days, is clear. In the first place, the Peking-Hankow Railway Administration had withdrawn their rolling stock from Hankow as soon as it was seen that the revolutionary forces must for the time being control the Hankow terminus. Secondly, the military strength of the People's Army, as they styled themselves, was not sufficient to justify a forward movement at the present stage. Again, policy dictated the solidification of the position south of the Yangtze as far as possible, before venturing far afield. Furthermore, the revolutionaries would be fighting under the most favourable conditions at their base, while if the Imperial troops should become involved in central China it would facilitate risings further North. Finally, it is probable that no body of revolutionary troops could have been trusted on an expedition North without the controlling hand of Li Yuan Hung, but it was too soon for the revolutionary leaders, in view of the time and manner of General Li's conversion, to stake the fortunes of the cause on his fidelity.

In the meantime the occupation of the "Three Cities" had been completed. The necessary details of civil government were being worked out and the new machinery got into running order.

Simultaneously General Li Yuan Hung, who was a man

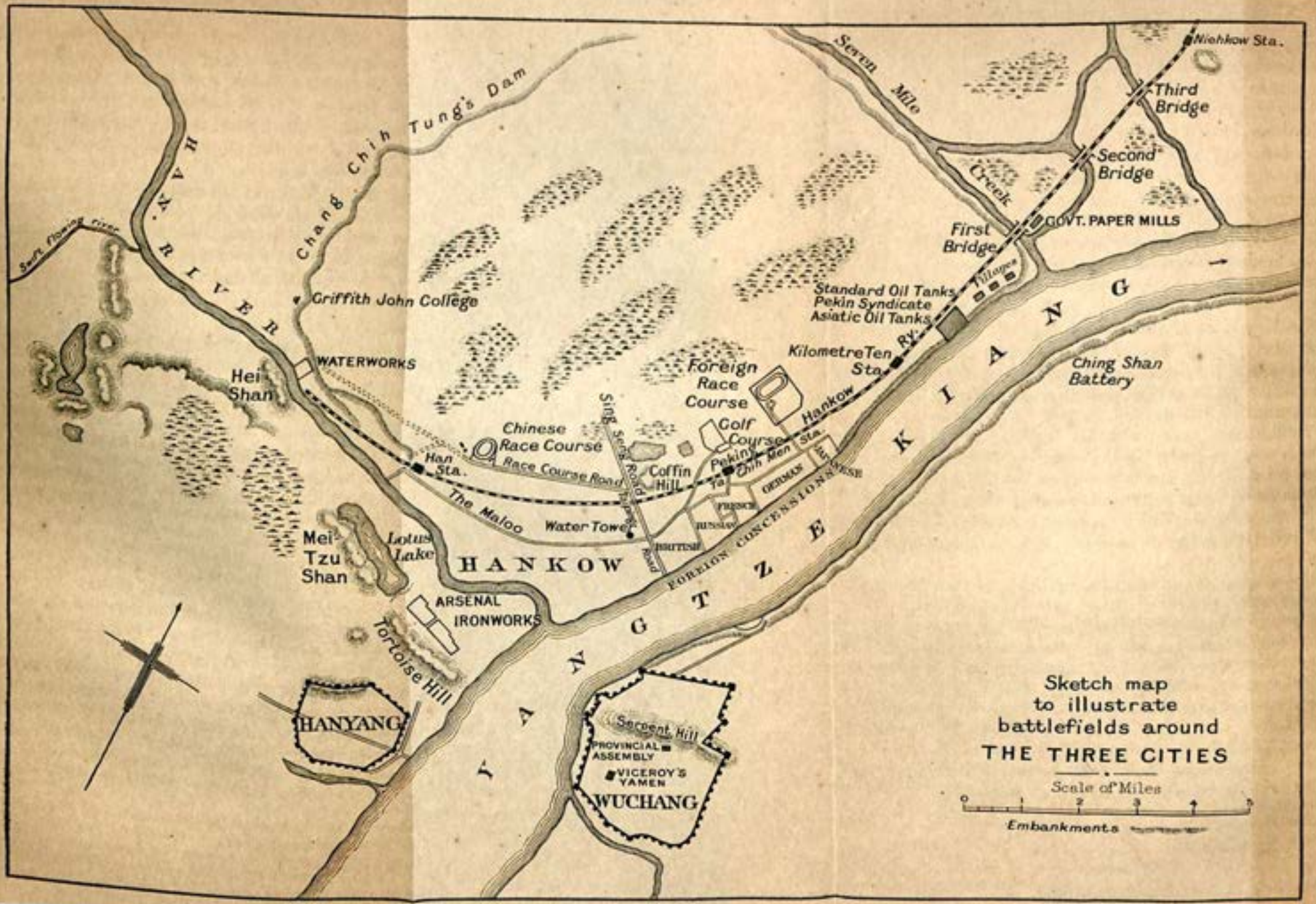
of humane instincts and with a sense of statecraft which enabled him to see the dangers of arousing unnecessarily bitter feelings and alienating foreign sympathies, was rigorously checking the excesses of his followers and the ruthless destruction of Manchus, to which in the first heated moments racial antagonism, long suppressed, had given rise. In the early days, indeed, this side of the rising had worn a deeply serious aspect. For a time a fierce blood-hunt had been in progress throughout the "Three Cities." No member of the once dominant race was allowed to escape the Chinese vengeance. There was no protection either in sex or age. Where origin was in doubt a rough shibboleth was imposed, the fallibility of which was by no means beyond question. Locally, Manchus were supposed to have a difficulty with "Liu" and combinations of "Liu," the character for six, and suspects were subjected to a counting test where hesitancy or variation, which fright might well produce, meant death. Fortunately, thanks to the repressive measures of General Li, this phase, constituting so serious a blot, was of comparatively short duration.

Finally, the position at Hanyang was being strongly entrenched and fortified, recruits enrolled and drilled, so that in a few days a force estimated as in the neighbourhood of thirty thousand men were prepared to fight under the new standard.

In estimating the military strength of the revolutionaries it must be admitted that barely a fourth were trained soldiers. All, however, were sufficiently well-equipped and supported by the inspiration of a great cause. The chief dangers in the situation were the loss of heart which might be expected to follow upon any serious reverses in the initial stages and the dying down of enthusiasm in the event of the issue being too long delayed.

So far the country at large had made no sign, but the leaders were aware that time alone was required for a response to be made to a call, the effectiveness of which must have surpassed their most sanguine expectations.

Strong as this position appeared to be, that of the Imperialists, on the other hand, was theoretically an overwhelming one. They controlled the Peking Hankow railway and held the command of the army. The navy,


Niehkow Sta.
Seven Mile
Third Bridge
Second Bridge
Creek
GOVT. PAPER MILLS
First Bridge
Chang Chih Tung's Dam
HAN RIVER
Griffith John College
Standard Oil Tanks
Pekin Syndicate
Asiatic Oil Tanks
Villages
Ry.
WATERWORKS
Hei Shan
Kilometre Ten Sta.
Foreign Race Course
Ching Shan Battery
Sing Seng Road
Chinese Race Course
Golf Course
Hankow Sta.
Han Sta.
Race Course Road
Coffin Hill
Peking
Ta Chih Men
GERMAN
FRENCH
RUSSIAN
BRITISH
The Maloo
Water Tower
Mei Tzu Shan
Lotus Lake
HANKOW
FOREIGN CONCESSIONS
ARSENAL
IRONWORKS
Tortoise Hill
HANYANG
Sergent Hill
PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY
VICEROY'S YAMEN
WUCHANG
YANGTZE KIANG
Sketch map
to illustrate
battlefields around
THE THREE CITIES
Scale of Miles
0 1 2 3 4 5
Embankments

under Admiral Sah, thanks to the magnificent waterway, was free to act, though more than six hundred miles from the sea, in co-operation with the land forces. Apart, therefore, from the question of financial resources, two conditions only were essential to their success—the continued loyalty of the troops, and, though in a less degree perhaps, confinement of the trouble to Hankow.

At the time of the outbreak the military force of China, which was stationed at strategic points throughout the country, consisted of modern-drilled and finely-equipped troops amounting to rather over 240,000 men, known as the Model Army,* and a certain number of old style troops, the last of which would have been disbanded at the end of 1911 under the then existing scheme.

It should also be mentioned that in many of the large towns there existed under the command of the Tartar Generals local forces derived from the descendants of the bannermen who were quartered there to keep the Chinese in subjection at the time of the Manchu conquest. But though they still drew the pay which had been enjoyed for more than two hundred and fifty years by them and their fathers before them, their state was one of pitiable degeneracy. They had long ceased to be a unit of any fighting value, and indeed in many instances became the first victims of the Chinese rising. Similarly in Peking there still remain a large number of the old Manchu troops, arranged under the banners of the eight Manchu Princely Houses. Them also more than two centuries of sloth has deprived of most of the qualities that once made of them a conquering race, and reduced to the extreme of inefficiency.

In the matter of material resources it is more difficult to form an estimate. It seemed probable that neither side could withstand a long campaign. As regards the revolutionaries, General Li Yuan Hung claimed to be well supplied with funds. It is known that with Hanyang he obtained control of over two million dollars, while the arsenal furnished him

* The Model Army was composed in October, 1911, of: (*a*) eleven divisions at full strength of rather more than 12,000 men each, and four divisions averaging half strength; (*b*) fourteen composite brigades; (*c*) two Manchurian local brigades and the Tibet garrison; and (*d*) the Imperial Guards, consisting of 11,260 men.

with all the arms and ammunition he could, for the present at any rate, require. There were also many generous supporters amongst the rich Chinese in foreign lands.

The Imperial Treasury, on the other hand, was well-nigh empty, and except for the surplus revenue of the railways there were no sources from which it could be replenished. In addition to a costly campaign the Government was faced with heavy foreign obligations * and the immense burden of the Government machine. It did not follow, however, that the Manchus would be defeated in the last resort for lack of funds. China is a country where people still hoard, and the private resources of the Imperial family must have represented many millions. They would prefer, of course, to make the nation bear the cost of the fight for the Dynasty's retention, but while there was good hope it was improbable that their cause would fail for lack of the sinews of war.

This is indeed exactly what occurred. Attempts were made in Peking to raise foreign loans, which for all practical purposes failed. So momentous was the issue that the Powers eventually extended the definition of neutrality to preclude financial assistance, with the result that each party was thrown early on its own resources.

So much for the general position of both sides.

From a military standpoint the first few days of the Revolution were devoid of incident. General Chang Piao, the commander of the 8th Division, it will be remembered, had escaped from Wuchang on the fall of the city. Collecting the remnant of loyal troops around him, amounting to some two thousand men, he had subsequently taken up a position on the Hankow side of the river at the ten-kilometre point of the Peking-Hankow railway, with a view to pro-

* The only reliable source of revenue, that derived from the Imperial Maritime Customs Duties, was heavily mortgaged to secure foreign obligations, and it was early arranged with the Imperial Government that it should be applied to the service of foreign loans and Boxer Indemnity obligations in accordance with the priority they severally enjoyed. In order to avoid foreign complications the revolutionary leaders acquiesced in this arrangement. Thus a substantial proportion of outstanding foreign obligations continued to be met, and both belligerents were deprived of a source of revenue more or less substantial as they controlled a greater or less number of ports.

tecting communication with the North pending the arrival of reinforcements. On Tuesday the 17th, just a week after the outbreak, Admiral Sah arrived with the Yangtze squadron, and established communications with the loyalist land forces. But as yet the main body of the Imperialists had not reached so far South, nor could General Chang Piao expect relief for a few days more. In the meantime General Li Yuan Hung was being much criticised for not pressing home the advantage which had been gained. The dislodgment of General Chang Piao, it was thought, and doubtless quite correctly, should have presented no serious difficulties to a force of the magnitude of the revolutionary army, even in its infant stage.

This view, however, was scarcely just to General Li, who at this time was handicapped by the lack of confidence on the part of his colleagues which has been already described. Nor did it take into account sufficiently the difficulties with which the revolutionary leaders were beset in suddenly assuming the control of an immense population and the administration of a great and wealthy area. Moreover, it seemed to overlook those other considerations which have also been referred to. No forward movement was possible such as could result in the gaining of any great strategic position, as for instance the railway tunnel at the Honan border or the Yellow River Bridge, and there was therefore no need in these early days for immediate action.

The first hostile demonstrations took place on the 17th. On the previous day General Li had paved the way for every assistance to his army and to securing the sympathy and goodwill of the people by issuing a Proclamation.

"Fathers, brothers, sisters all," ran this document in the primitive terms that so often accompany the expression of deep feeling, "we are now raising troops to follow in the footsteps of our fathers and exterminate our enemies. We have already recaptured Wuchang, therefore fear not, only do your duty.

"First and foremost, you must on no account disturb the Concessions, you must not injure foreign life or property, you must not burn consulates or churches, because the foreigners have not injured us. Those who have injured us

are the Manchus. If we injure foreigners, they will become our enemies, and then we shall be in evil case.

"Secondly, let each man keep to his own business, students to their books, farmers to their farming, workmen to their work. With regard to merchants, we are specially bound to protect them, and we shall not allow the markets to be stopped. If there are any who stop the markets by rumours we shall certainly punish them.

"Thirdly, you must not on any account abduct, burn, or kill. Our idea is to save our brethren; if you burn, abduct, and kill, is this not injuring our brethren? If any do these things the Government will certainly kill them.

"Fourthly, do not in any way oppose our army. If any oppose us they are not the true sons of the Yellow Emperor; we shall certainly consider ourselves their enemies, and on no account forgive them their wrongs.

"These four important things we wish to be widely known. If you offend against any of them, you cannot escape punishment. Let all obey and all will be well!"

This was followed up on the morning of the 17th by final overtures to the loyalist troops under Chang Piao to join their erstwhile comrades in the cause to which they had committed themselves. To this, however, there was no response, and it was accordingly decided that the time had now come for action.

In the evening of that day a revolutionary force two thousand strong, with four small pieces of field artillery, was dispatched up the Han River. Making a rapid detour across the plain to the back of the foreign Concessions on the north side of the railway, they fell upon the rear of the Imperialists at dawn on the 18th. The attack, however, failed. Recovering from the first surprise, the Imperialists rallied and put up a resistance which in due course caused the revolutionaries to retire.

On neither side was the damage serious, and the affair was in fact the merest skirmish. Nevertheless it represented a small advantage to the loyalists, while from the broad Imperialist standpoint it was of immense importance as indicating a willingness to fight on the part of the troops, which, if not exactly contrary to expectation, had at least been open to some doubt.

"The Imperialists did not follow up their advantage, although they had an excellent opportunity of doing so. A complete rout of the revolutionaries might easily have been encompassed, with excellent moral effect. The revolutionary force was in the main composed of raw recruits, who were evidently disheartened by the result of their first efforts, and as they fell back across the plains on Hankow in complete disorder they offered an easy prey to a disciplined enemy.

The Imperialists, however, seemed to be content to repulse the attack and hold their position. In the meantime fresh detachments had been coming over from Wuchang, until by the middle of the afternoon some 5,000 rebel troops, mostly trained men, were in position behind the foreign settlements for a further attack on the Imperialist camp at Kilometre Ten. They were well supported by field artillery.

The execution of this manœuvre at first sight suggests the inference that the revolutionary plans had for some unknown reason miscarried. The thing from a military standpoint would appear to have been to have attacked the Imperialist camp simultaneously on two sides. This could have been easily done had the new force which was now to carry on the fight taken up their present position during the previous day or night. So much seems obvious.

It must not be supposed from this, however, that General Li's strategy was necessarily at fault. It is probable that he was influenced by other considerations. It was important, indeed it was essential, for him to secure a victory. He conceivably thought that with such a proportion of raw levies there would be greater danger to his own forces than to the enemy in a concerted movement carried out in the difficult light of dawn. So far from being criticised, his tactics should perhaps rather be applauded. He employed raw recruits to make a surprise attack. If it succeeded, as it well might do, great heart would have been put into his new men. If it failed, the real effort could be made later in the day, and the trained forces retrieve the earlier reverse.

This is precisely what occurred. Towards the latter end

of the afternoon the rival forces engaged in the nearest approach to an engagement that had yet taken place. The Imperialists had pushed forward a small force and taken up a position in the neighbourhood of the racecourse. The revolutionaries were posted at different points over the plain, their principal position being near the golf course. At first the revolutionaries were unsuccessful in their attack on the camp at the station, but later, concentrating on the Racecourse, they succeeded in forcing the Imperialists to retire. They themselves then took up the Racecourse position, and their subsequent operations were directed by officers from a clay-pigeon tower of the Hankow Gun Club situated in the Race Club enclosure.

In the meantime Admiral Sah's cruisers had arrived on the scene and, according to the accounts of eye-witnesses, circling round in approved style, dropped a few shells amongst the revolutionaries as each boat came broadside. The damage, however, was trifling, and night found no change in the relative positions of the combatants, who continued to maintain a respectful distance. The few revolutionary wounded were brought to Hankow and treated in the Mission Hospital and at two Red Cross stations at the racecourse and at the railway station. But the unfortunate Imperial wounded were left on the field, several, it appears, being killed in cold blood by the natives of the surrounding country, who, it was said, had no love for any soldier who would fight in the Manchu cause.

The next morning the revolutionaries commenced operations cautiously. Continuing their advance, they moved slowly from the Racecourse on to the Imperial camp, meeting with no resistance. Fears, however, were entertained of an ambush, and scouts were sent forward to locate the enemy.

According to the account of one eye-witness, which it is to be hoped is more amusing than veracious, "these scouts were elderly coolies, recently recruited at Wuchang, the younger and likelier men remembering, in common with their revolutionary masters, that they had yet many years of life which they could not afford to risk. Fortunately for all parties, the coolie corps was able to report the Imperialist camp deserted, and as the gunboats had temporarily dis-



Revolutionary Soldiers at Hankow.



The approach of the Imperialist Fleet towards Hankow, evidenced by the distant smoke. The Revolutionary War Junks preparing to put back to Wuchang.

appeared down-stream, the rebel troops were able to indulge in the congenial task of looting without uneasiness."

It may be presumed that the Imperialists had received information which led them to suppose that an attempt was being made to take them in the rear and cut their communications. For not only was the camp found deserted, but so hastily had the retirement been effected that several railway trucks loaded with ammunition and supplies were left behind, including a substantial sum in silver, in addition to the military stores of all descriptions.

Thus ended the preliminary encounter. It was in some respects perhaps suggestive of the methods which tradition associates with Chinese military operations. At any rate it gave no promise of that brilliant exhibition of scientific warfare and heroic deeds of which the same field was so soon to be the scene.

Its effect was to leave the People's Army in command of the stretch of country lying between the Han River and Seven Mile Creek, and to put great heart into the revolutionary cause.

CHAPTER XI

THE DELAY OF YUAN SHIH K'AI

THE Manchu appeal to the magnanimity of Yuan Shih K'ai evoked neither an immediate nor a sympathetic response. In the meantime speculation was rife as to his probable course. In some quarters it was surmised that he would refuse to emerge from his enforced retirement. Others, on the other hand, looked to see him come out and play a great part in the shaping of his country's destiny. It is rather a curious fact that while Chinese were divided, the best foreign opinion took the latter and the higher view. At the same time it scouted the suggestion, at this time freely hinted, that Yuan Shih K'ai would range himself on the side of the revolutionaries, and seize the opportunity of revenging himself on those who had caused his fall. It paid him the compliment of being endowed with at least that degree of greatness that would enable him to rise superior to the petty spites of lesser men.

There were also other reasons for this view. Much was argued from Yuan's well-known leaning towards conservative statesmanship. The famous Chinese "Doctrine of the Mean" had hitherto ruled his actions; on every former occasion of crisis in his career he had steered a middle course. It was not probable that he would now be influenced by extremists or be attracted to extreme measures. Again, Yuan had shown himself a sound and patriotic statesman. Finally, as has already been stated, it was open to considerable doubt whether he would have found a warm welcome from the leaders of revolutionary thought. Rightly or wrongly, to him was attributed the betrayal and persecution of K'ang Yu Wei and his followers, the circumstances of which have already been described, and though the People's Army repre-

sented an entirely distinctive body of opinion, there was no doubt a good deal of resentment cherished among them on this and other grounds. Had he not been sternly repressive in his measures against reformers and agitators during his six years' reign as Viceroy of Chihli at Tientsin, and had he not been equally alert as a Grand Councillor in 1908, during the last few months of the lives of the famous Empress-Dowager and of the ill-fated Emperor Kuang Hsü? At least it was open to doubt whether he would be received with open arms.

Yuan's reply to the Imperial command to proceed to Wuchang was contained in a Memorial, which appeared in the *Gazette* of the 21st of October, though presented some days earlier. It was couched in strikingly sarcastic terms:—

"Your memorialist begs the Sacred Glance on his Memorial, thanking the Throne for the favour shown to him and reporting in detail the bad state of his health, which renders it necessary temporarily to hasten on with his cure. Your memorialist has respectfully perused a copy of the Decree of October 14th, which was sent him by the Cabinet, and which ran as follows: 'Yuan Shih K'ai is hereby appointed Viceroy of Hukuang, and will also superintend the measures for the suppression of the rebels. He should proceed at once to his post, and he need not come up to Peking for audience.' He has also perused the Decree of the same day, namely, 'Yuan Shih K'ai having been appointed Viceroy of Hukuang, the troops of these provinces, as well as the reinforcements sent from other provinces, are all placed under the control of and at the disposal of the said Viceroy.'

"I am much ashamed at being the recipient of the Imperial commands, and in view of the favour shown for generations, I feel remorse that I have done nothing to requite it. After the accession of Your Imperial Majesty to the Throne I again received very great favours, in which affection and honours were equally predominant. In the interval I have not been serving the Throne, owing to my being away at my native place on account of the state of my health. On receipt of the Imperial commands I was filled with the deepest gratitude. At this time of crisis in the Empire I ought to comply with the Imperial Decree and proceed immediately to deal with the situation. But my old trouble with my foot is not yet thoroughly set right, and last winter my left arm became affected and frequently caused me great pain. An habitual complaint of some years' duration can hardly be expected to be cured immediately. Although my breathing and my body showed weakness, yet my energy remained unimpaired. Recently, however, when it suddenly became cold at the beginning of autumn, asthma and fever, which I used to suffer from, again attacked me. In addition to this I suffer from giddiness and nervousness, and when reflecting on a matter

my mind wanders. Although these symptoms cannot be cured in a day, they are merely external complaints which are much easier to cure than my old illness. At this time of crisis in military affairs I do not venture to make a hasty application for leave, but my loss of energy makes it really difficult for me to struggle along. I have called in a doctor to effect a cure as quickly as possible, and at the same time I am making all necessary arrangements. As soon as I am somewhat able to get about I will at once proceed on the way, thus taking the opportunity to requite in an infinitesimal degree the great kindness shown to me. This Memorial, expressing my gratitude for the Imperial favour, and reporting in detail the bad state of my health, is hereby presented for the Imperial Glance and commands."

Such a reply to an urgent Imperial command may be said to have reflected with tolerable accuracy the spirit of the times. It was, of course, no new thing for officials to procrastinate and endeavour to evade the performance of disagreeable duties. But the Memorial of Yuan Shih K'ai breathed a different spirit. Its tone showed how low the Imperial power had fallen, and spoke eloquently of the changing relations between Emperor and subject. The end to unquestioning compliance with the dictates of the Imperial Will had come. Whatever might be the outcome, hereafter men would reserve to themselves at least a measure of liberty of thought and action.*

The delay which had already taken place, and the further delay that was destined to come, only emphasised these things. But, what was more serious from the Imperialist standpoint, it also gave a disastrous impression of the relative strength of Yuan's position and the supreme incompetence of the Manchus. As day by day passed the prestige of the reigning House steadily declined, and an overwhelming conviction was produced that the life of the dynasty was rapidly ebbing away.

The dilatoriness of Yuan Shih K'ai has been severely criticised. In many quarters it was strongly felt that he

* On October 18th a rescript in the vermilion pencil was received in reply to this Memorial in what, in all the circumstances, were somewhat pathetic terms, as follows: "The above has been noted. Matters at Wuchang and Hanyang are very critical, and the said Viceroy in the past has always been a just and loyal officer and zealous in the performance of his duties. Let him immediately cure himself, and in spite of his illness let him proceed, thus justifying the extraordinary confidence placed in him by the Throne."

took advantage of his position to weaken the Manchu House. Others went so far as to believe that he appreciated very clearly how the policy of the Palace party had placed him in a dominating position, and that he used his position knowingly and deliberately to secure their downfall. It was also alleged that he had been approached before the issue of the Edict of October 14th, and had pledged himself to the Imperial cause. Finally, he was accused of being in touch with the revolutionaries with a view to joining them on his own terms.

The evidence, however, on which these charges are based can only be described at most as inconclusive. In the main it has been matter of conjecture. As yet, for example, nothing had transpired to show that at this stage Yuan was or had been in touch with the revolutionaries.* Again, though he had been sounded by the Court party earlier in the year, it is not at all clear that he had been again approached in the changed circumstances; or if he was, that his agreement was unconditional.

In the fullness of time the details of this inside history may be revealed. The prejudices and sympathies inevitably generated in contemporary minds will then have passed away, and posterity will give itself up to a more calm reflection, and bring in its considered judgment. But in the meantime, the views of critics having been duly recorded, a word should be said in regard to Yuan Shih Kai's side of the case.

The suddenness of the outbreak and the rapid success which attended it left no one unsurprised. The revolutionary leaders had kept their secret well, and the Imperial summons must have found Yuan with a mind still indeterminate as to the course that he should pursue. It must be remembered that the genius of his character was all opposed to rapid decisions, that his political sagacity represented a curious combination of instinct and slow-moving judgment. He was now faced with what must well have looked like the supreme crisis of his life. It

* At a later stage of the Revolution Dr. Sun Yat Sen stated publicly that he had been approached by Yuan Shih K'ai several months previously, but it has not been stated that such overtures were on Republican lines, which would have been quite contrary to Yuan's convictions.

is scarcely surprising that he delayed. A stronger or a weaker man would have been decided. With Yuan, his strength made possible a measure of caution as a concession to that weakness in his character which demanded perhaps abstention. Yuan's Memorial in reply to the Edict appointing him was construed by many as a refusal to answer the call. But to those who understood him best it was clear that he was only temporising. It is true that "Rome was burning," but he was too strong a man to consent to be driven, either by exterior forces or by the dictates of an element within himself which did not command his whole-hearted approval.

It is conceived that not even Yuan's strongest critics would suggest that his task was an easy one. The more sober critics, who alone perhaps need be seriously considered, have only gone the length of urging that a high-souled man would either have come out immediately or have stood aside to make room for others, that he stamped himself as an opportunist, that he acted selfishly and was not altogether devoid of the ambition to humiliate the proud House which had decreed his fall. The facts may bear that interpretation. It is even possible, and indeed probable, that the personal motive was not entirely absent. Human nature asserts its characteristics in all men, and the East is pre-eminently the land of opportunism and personal strife.

But if his course of action seemed to show that he was not altogether free from human weaknesses, the trend of events indicated even more clearly that Yuan's mind was mainly dominated by other and higher sentiments. He was a Chinese of the Chinese, a true son of Han. He had neither reason nor desire to bolster up the Manchu Dynasty. What he was imbued with was a large and patriotic interest in the future of his country. If, however, he were to do anything in the direction of the achievement of permanent good, the first step necessary was the securing of his own position. The ambitions that dominated him must necessarily be matter of conjecture, but if a glimpse could have been got into that inscrutable mind, it would not improbably have been seen that apart from the desire to secure his own safety from calumny and ingratitude, he was mainly desirous

of placing himself in a position where he could continue a career of usefulness when the work that lay immediately to hand should be accomplished. He may pardonably have regarded himself as necessary to his country, and as the only man capable of welding rival factions and establishing a strong and enlightened Government on constitutional lines.

The appointment to Hukuang, despite the additional military powers which had been conferred upon him, did not place him in a sufficiently strong position for his purpose. That was the primary explanation of his delay. In effect he was not willing to combine with Yin Ch'ang and other Manchus merely to save the Manchu order. He would only come out on condition of being placed in a position of such strength that he could in his own way steer the Ship of State, in accordance with his conceptions of the requirements of his country's good, through the stormy seas of the crisis.

On the Manchu side there was a period of hesitancy and doubt. They began to feel that whatever the recall of Yuan might mean in the best interests of China, possibly a blunder had been made from their narrower and more selfish standpoint. It is probable that there was not at that time any thought in their minds, or at least not in the minds of the more mature among them, that he would not do his utmost to secure the retention of the dynasty. To that extent, at least, he was clearly bound by honour and the requirement of pursuing a course which would commend itself to the European sense of the fitness of things. Nor did Yuan himself believe at that time, as his subsequent policy will show, that the movement would so rapidly attain such magnitude and strength. He undoubtedly expected to be able to preserve the dynasty, and the belief may be ventured that he entertained an honest intention so to do. But he was determined that preservation should be effected in such a way that the continued existence of the Manchu rule would be on conditions which would ensure the welfare of the country. Unless he could attain for himself a recognised position of such a dignity as would justify his dictation, backed by a power that would enforce the conditions he might impose, he would not undertake the task now pressed upon him.

In other words, he meant to place himself in the position

of being a great military dictator. He did not propose to be hampered or coerced by Yin Ch'ang. Nor again was he willing that his plans should be thwarted by the employment in the principal commands of officers who might be hostile towards him. He required the general in command in the field to be a man on whom he could rely.

From Yuan's standpoint as a man and a statesman, it cannot fairly be said that these demands were either unnecessary or unjust. The question before the Manchus, however, was a very different one. The ruling House had liberty, life, and a great heritage at stake, and it was a tremendous demand that they should hand themselves over, bound hand and foot, to the tender mercies of a purely Chinese statesman, whose sympathies were not theirs whatever his judgment might say in regard to their occupation of a necessary place in his scheme of political readjustment. It is an open secret that the younger and more fiery princes advocated a very different course. By this time an army corps was at the front, and communications were well guarded. They urged that the fortunes of the House should be put to the test of battle. In the meantime they should either break with Yuan, refuse his terms, or temporise. They suspected his loyalty, and urged that a careful watch should be set over him, with a view to striking him down at the first sign.

It is certain that this could have been done. It is no less certain that Yuan Shih K'ai realised it. That he took a strong and courageous course when his own personal safety was by no means assured seems to afford overwhelming evidence of the honesty of his purpose and the strength of his convictions.

As events proved, the rash, but more dignified, counsels of the younger princes were not allowed to prevail. Yuan's terms were accepted, and a further step taken along that bitter path of humiliation and despair.

On the 27th of October the following Edict appeared in the Government *Gazette*:—

"The Viceroy of Hukuang, Yuan Shih K'ai, is hereby appointed High Commissioner. All the reinforcing Yangtze squadron, as well as naval and military forces, and the various forces that have been recently sent out, are to be placed under the command and disposal of the said High

Commissioner. The affairs that have to be conducted in co-operation with the Viceroys and Governors of adjacent provinces are to be so carried out by him from time to time. The suppression and pacification of rebels in the said provinces are to be speedily carried out by Yuan Shih K'ai according to circumstances. As military affairs may undergo many changes in a short space of time, the General Staff and the Lu-chun Pu shall not exercise their far-distant control over the campaign of Hupei, so that responsibility may be placed on one person, and speedy success achieved. As the Minister for War Yin Ch'ang has to perform multifarious duties in the Ministry, and cannot possibly remain outside for a considerable length of time, We hereby order Feng Kuo Chang to take command of the first army. When Yuan Shih K'ai has arrived at his post, Yin Ch'ang shall return to Peking to render service."

CHAPTER XII

THE SECOND SESSION OF THE TZU CHENG YUAN

WHILE the demands of Yuan Shih K'ai were filling the hearts of the Imperial clansmen with apprehension and doubt, the proceedings of the Tzu Cheng Yuan were proving only a few degrees less embarrassing, that is to say, speaking from the political point of view. From the purely personal standpoint there was a distinction with a difference. In the former case much of the dignity and authority of the Imperial Clan had in effect to be surrendered. In the latter case, as will be seen, there was found a more agreeable sacrifice.

The first meeting of the second session of the Tzu Cheng Yuan took place on the 21st of October, being the first day of the ninth moon of the third year of Hsuan T'ung. The session had long been looked forward to with interest by habitual observers of the doings of the Chinese political world. It was thought that it would be something of an epoch-making event in the history of the evolution of representative, or constitutional, government in China. The Court party, on the other hand, regarded it with very different feelings. It was realised that the Senate had many legitimate grounds of grievance. Even in happier times their meeting would have caused a sense of uneasiness. At the present juncture it could only produce a feeling of dread.

The proceedings at the first meeting were of an orderly and purely formal nature. In the absence of the Prince Regent the opening ceremony was undertaken by the Prince of Li, who delivered an inaugural address. His Excellency Na Tung then proceeded to read to the members the following propitiatory Decree :—

"It is now three years since Our accession to the Throne, and in those three years We have been diligent in the administration of the Government and have worked hard day and night. Now that the time for the second session of the Senate has arrived, you members should respectfully give ear to Our instructions. In the present civilised world Constitutional Government is a special and urgent necessity. In the tenth moon of last year We effected popular reforms in compliance with the wishes of our predecessor, and at the request of the officials of the Metropolis and Provinces We issued an Edict shortening the period for the opening of Parliament to the Fifth year of Hsuan T'ung, and ordering the revision of the programme of constitutional preparation. As the time is drawing nearer every year, the work of preparation is increasing day by day. The said Assembly enjoys the high respect of the nation and is undoubtedly the forerunner of harmonious conferences. As the Assembly had some time ago reached a condition of considerable efficiency, it should have made considerable progress by this time. In the discussion of every question the opinion of all the members should be taken so as to obtain the best results. All matters should be carefully considered before a decision is arrived at, so that continual improvement may be effected. We hereby specially order the Ministers of State to hand over to the Senate for discussion the various questions awaiting their decision, as well as those which were not completed by the Senate last year. You members, being well acquainted with the condition of the country and the state of public feeling, should bring all your loyalty and patriotism to bear in dealing with the present difficult situation. It is necessary that a Constitution should be established without disturbing the people, and matters should be carried out only after due deliberation, so that the foundations of the country may be strengthened and a peaceful government may be instituted. This is Our earnest desire.

"Let this be promulgated for general information."

It is worthy of note that this document refrains from specific reference to the Hupei revolt. But there is a touch of that pathos which was soon to mark so many Imperial utterances. It breathes an uneasy sense. There is perhaps no hint of surrender, but reading between the lines it was calculated to encourage rather than to repress, and suggested an inclination to bow to the storm rather than to struggle against it.

With the reading of the Imperial Edict the first meeting came to an end, the members separating quietly for their homes, the tea-houses, and the clubs. Three outwardly uneventful days followed. On the fifth day of the moon, being the 25th of October, the second meeting took place. It was of a very different nature. According to the

accounts of those present and the accounts which subsequently appeared in the Chinese Press, the meeting was a stirring one. The agenda consisted of five items, the first three being draft Bills dealing with the amendment of the Company Laws, the regulation of the Civil Service, and the prohibition of gambling at Canton.

These Bills were introduced by the Government and received but scanty attention at the hands of members, who pointed out with a good deal of directness that the present was no time for debate on matters of abstract importance. These matters were therefore dropped in favour of the last two items on the agenda.

Of these the first, No. 4, was a resolution for a Memorial to the Throne in regard to the adoption of remedial measures to save the Empire in its perilous situation. The mover, a Mr. Lo Chi, was a member from Hunan. His speech, and indeed the whole debate, afforded repeated illustrations of the difficulties under which China must long labour in her central deliberative assemblies. Mr. Lo Chi spoke at great length, and forcefully if at times apparently somewhat irrelevantly. Unfortunately he was followed with difficulty, and much of what he said was lost by reason of his strong provincial accent.

But the present was not one of those occasions when a complete comprehension of the niceties of argument was very material. The motion was accepted without a dissentient, and a draft Memorial adopted, which though interesting has not a sufficiently direct bearing to be included here.

The meeting, with quickened pulse and keenly alert, now come to the real business of the sitting, turned its attention to item No. 5, which took the form of the following resolution:—

"That a Memorial be submitted to the Throne to impeach a Minister of State, who, by his illegitimate uses of power, has precipitated the disturbances in the Empire, and whose actions are at variance with the best traditions of loyalty."

The following is a very moderate account of the fierce debate which ensued:—

"Mr. Mao Lin, member for Kueichow, and Mr. Yi Chung

Chi moved and seconded Resolution 5, which aimed at an attack on H.E. Sheng Hsüan Huai, the Minister of Communications. Mr. Mao declared that the present situation can be traced to its fountain-head, which is H.E. Sheng Hsüan Huai. He by his loan and railway policies precipitated the outbreak of Szechuen, which in its turn brought about the troubles in Hupei. In carrying out these policies he has violated the constitution of the Tzu Cheng Yuan, which provides clearly in one of its articles that in making foreign loans the Yuan should be given opportunities for discussion. Moreover, the question of finance ought to be in the direct and full control of the Ministry of Finance. Sheng Hsüan Huai has therefore travelled out of his legitimate field to negotiate the Four Nations' and the Japanese loans. He has usurped the power of another department. When one comes to the railway policy, ought such a momentous issue to be decided with no reference to the Yuan? It is doubtful whether Sheng Hsüan Huai has the full concurrence of his colleagues in the Cabinet; he took advantage of the absence of the Premier to issue the Edict and to put forward his policy of nationalisation. He and his oligarchy think that they can further their scheme of absolutism by the issue of Imperial Decrees.

"The seconder of the resolution talked in much the same manner, but with greater emphasis, and used much stronger language, which brought plenty of applause. The atmosphere was already very excitable when he left the platform and Mr. Chi Chung Yin, member for Chihli, rose saying that a memorial of impeachment had already been drafted. The text was handed over to the secretary, who read it aloud amidst cheers. Mr. Chi pointed out that the accusations put forward by the two previous speakers against Sheng Hsüan Huai are technical and may not prove effective. He therefore proceeded to accuse the Minister of Communications with political treachery in his railway policy. Is it a policy? he demanded. All that Sheng did was to deprive the legitimate shareholders, whose rights were invested in them during the last reign, of their interests and money in the railways without due compensation. The differential treatment of the

Szechuen and Canton shareholders is against the principle of equity; the shares of the Canton-Hankow line are only partly paid up, so in giving them 60 per cent., the shareholders get all their investments back in full, which is not the case with the Szechuen railways. When the trouble broke out in Chengtu, Sheng Hsüan Huai actually had the effrontery to order provincial troops to the scene without consulting the General Staff and the Board of War. His action is truly extraordinary and is against the best traditions of loyalty.

"The speaker was about to deal with the Currency Reform Bureau when Mr. Chen Mao Ting, one of the members nominated by the Government, who seems to have a good command of the 'House' despite the difficulties he labours under in speaking in his Fukien accent, intervened, criticising it as being irrelevant. As regards the matter under discussion, he had nothing to add to the previous speakers except that he believed Sheng Hsüan Huai and his oligarchy intended to make use of their power further, and that the railway policy was merely a test. Mr. Chen was much cheered when he resumed his seat.

"At that moment the House was very excited. The deputies of the Board of Communications were asked to reply to the charge. One of them attempted to do so, but there were continuous cries of 'Sheng Hsüan Huai,' 'Make him come,' 'Let him defend himself,' 'Telephone for him to come immediately,' and so forth. The deputy who had ascended the platform to attempt to reply was greeted by sneers couched in unparliamentary language. Other speakers tried to gain a hearing, several of them at the same time, and some of them actually spoke with much vehemence. Another deputy tried to defend Sheng by stating that his railway loans were really based on the policy of the late Chang Chih Tung, but the uproar made it impossible for him to be heard.

"When copies of the draft memorial of impeachment were distributed to the members and the question was put, they agreed unanimously to adopt the text and submit the memorial to the Throne without delay. In spite of the lack of time for copying, the members insisted that both the memorials should be presented to-morrow morning. Mr.

Yi Chung Chi emphatically declared that should the memorials prove abortive the Yuan must draft another and yet a third; should all the three be met with the same fate, 'we will all sit in the Yuan and refuse to do anything else except to denounce Sheng Hsüan Huai.'

"Mr. Kiang Yi, an Anhui member and an elegant speaker, rose to continue the debate. While denouncing the Minister of Communications he proceeded to blame the Government in dealing with the loss of Wuchang.

"The President, foreseeing that the House would prove uncontrollable if the debate should continue, moved the adjournment and walked away. Many of the members were still standing and desirous to speak when the House dispersed." *

* *Peking Daily News*, October 26, 1911.

CHAPTER XIII

THE FALL OF SHENG HSÜAN HUAI

THE fierce attack of the Tzu Cheng Yuan on Sheng Hsüan Huai caused no surprise. Something of the kind had been expected. As has been seen, despite its theoretical soundness, the railway policy of centralisation had provoked the strongest hostility.

To this feeling the provincial members of the Senate were only too glad of an opportunity to give expression, while the members, in their corporate capacity, keenly resented the manner in which the rights they had asserted during their first session had been ignored. Even without the Revolution there must have been a fierce protest or an impeachment. The outbreak in Szechuen and the Revolution, which, with respect to the speaker in the Tzu Cheng Yuan quoted in the last chapter, were quite unconnected, only provided them with "a moral to adorn the tale."

It was also surmised that the recall of Yuan Shih K'ai must eventuate in the retirement of Sheng. The two men had for years been on distant terms. It was probable that there was no room for both of them in any Ministry that could be formed, and it seemed likely that if Yuan returned to power the days of Sheng's reign would be numbered.

It was not expected, however, that he would be ruthlessly sacrificed either to popular clamour or to the demands of the readjustment of political forces. Nor was he deserving of such a fate. In his short ministry at the Board of Communications he had done much to introduce business methods. As has been seen, he had created a policy and formulated a programme which, could they have been successfully carried through, would have tightened the rapidly loosening bonds by which the huge Empire was

knit. That the contemplated measures must prove unpopular was admitted. That the forces which were arrayed against them were under-estimated is now clear. But when the tide began to rise there was no wavering in the course that had been set, no flinching from the ordeal that might lie before.

Sheng was an old man. A younger man might have weakened. It is conceivable, as has been already pointed out, that, realising the fewness of his remaining years, he was making an honest attempt to place the railways of his country on the only basis which his experience taught him could make them an asset and an item of strength to the Empire. His enemies accused him of formulating a policy to his own ends and for the personal benefit of the Metropolitan Mandarinate. They also accused him of disregard of the law and disloyalty to the Throne. A more absurd charge was never framed. His policy successful could only strengthen the Throne, and it was inaugurated with the full consent of the Cabinet under Imperial Decree. Nevertheless, Sheng Kung-pao was dismissed in terms of ignominy rarely equalled, a sacrifice to provincial resentment of what had been regarded as Central Government encroachments.

The following are the terms of this infamous Decree:—

"The Senate has memorialised alleging illegal usurpation of authority on the part of a Minister of State which has caused an outbreak of rebellion, and showing cause for the infliction of a penalty for his offence.

"This Memorial states that the origin of the present Revolution is to be ascribed to the Minister of Communications, Sheng Hsüan Huai, who deceived the Throne and stirred up hatred by his illegal actions. The said Minister being in control of the system of communications did not scruple obstinately to act on his own authority, and failing to distinguish between matters of greater or less importance, heedlessly omitted to consult the Senate or refer to the Cabinet for decision in cases where this should have been done. No sooner had the Cabinet announced a policy than he would at once proceed to overturn it, memorialising in his own name to the deception of the Throne and people alike and discrediting the schemes of the Government, thus gradually bringing about calamities.

"The present troubles in Szechuen are in great measure due to the Ministry's decision only to allow the funds actually expended on work and materials to rank for repayment in guaranteed Government bonds and not to repay in accordance with the actual capital subscribed, as

was done in the case of the mercantile shares of the Hupei railway, and further the decision to treat the millions lost through Shih Tien Chang's* fault as non-existent caused great hatred and grief—governors and governed were estranged and the outbreak in Szechuen was the result, men's minds were disturbed and revolutionaries and mutinous soldiery seized the opportunity to create disturbance. Verily this Minister is a principal enemy of the State.

"We find that the nationalisation of the railways was in its inception a policy based on Our compassion for Our merchants and people, but Sheng Hsüan Huai failed to carry out Our virtuous intention and acted ill in many respects. Sheng Hsüan Huai has enjoyed many favours from the Throne, and his conduct in presuming to act illegally on his own authority to the detriment of the public interest displays an utter lack of sense of gratitude and of duty.

"Let the Minister of Communications, Sheng Hsüan Huai, be forthwith cashiered, never to be employed again. The Premier, Prince Ch'ing, and the Associate Premiers, the Grand Secretaries, Na T'ung and Hsu Shih Ch'ang, in that they joined with Sheng Hsüan Huai in adding their names to misleading memorials, also did wrong. Let them be handed over to the Boards concerned for the determination of a penalty.

"In future these Ministers should see to it that in employing men and conducting the affairs of State they avoid stirring up hatred, so that they may loyally assist Us in safeguarding the public weal and render help in this time of crisis."

The shamelessness of this action is emphasised by the circumstances in which it was carried out. It appears that after H.E. Sheng had received details of the proceedings at the meeting of the Tzu Cheng Yuan he immediately went to see Prince Ch'ing. There he found Duke Tsai Tze, and the three discussed the situation. Sheng proposed, and indeed urged, the desirability of his resignation. He pointed out that in view of the depth of feeling that had been stirred up this course would be in the interests of the Government as of himself. The Duke, it is said, assured Sheng that he need have no fear; the Government intended to remain firm. Sheng then reluctantly agreed to refrain from resignation. Further discussion and consideration of the matter, however, among the Palace party subsequently resulted in Prince Ch'ing being induced to consent to the dismissal of Sheng, and at the next Cabinet meeting the Prince Regent signed the necessary Decree. On this occasion Duke Tsai Tze was not present, and there is no reason to suppose that he was a party to any plot to prevent action

* The Szechuen Railway Director who had employed the funds to speculate in rubber.

by Sheng which might deprive the Court of the opportunity of humbling him. But that Sheng was willing and anxious to resign was well known. If the Palace party did not feel strong enough to sustain him—and, to be quite fair to them, it seemed probable at this time that such was the case—cost what it might, they should have taken the less contemptible line of accepting his resignation. The fact is, however, that a sense of terror brooded over the Imperial councils in the Forbidden City, which warped men's judgments and numbed their better instincts. It was deliberately preferred to sacrifice Sheng than to risk the increase of the feeling against the Manchu House.

With the Decree cashiering Sheng Kung-pao a second Decree was issued appointing H.E. T'ang Shao Yi as Minister of Communications. The appointment was obvious. It was also said to have been included in the conditions laid down by Yuan Shih K'ai, whose ablest lieutenant T'ang had been for many years. Apart from this, however, the appointment was fully justified on T'ang's experience as a former President of the Board, and in every other way. The only question was whether he would accept office.

At this point the Sheng Act in the Drama should have been ended and the curtain have been rung down. Sheng's enemies, however, were not content with his dismissal. The more extreme amongst them demanded his instant decapitation, while none were willing that he should be allowed to go free without further examination of his case. Intoxicated with the immediate success attending the impeachment proceedings, feeling got entirely out of hand and a wave of relentless persecution swept over his erstwhile prosecutors.

The Edict dismissing him "never to be employed again" was issued on the 26th. Within a few hours his fate, if he remained in Peking, was sealed. It rapidly became obvious that his only chance of escape lay in flight.

This state of affairs did not become generally appreciated until the 27th. It was the first day of the Peking Autumn Race Meeting. Foreign Peking, and no small number of Chinese, were out on the picturesque racecourse a few miles south of the city. Legations were deserted and

Ministers were endeavouring to snatch a few hours' relief from the worries of the stressful situation. Private news of Sheng's increasing danger reached some members of the Diplomatic Body about noon, and it was soon noticed that the Ministers of certain Powers had quietly left.

It was a curiously dramatic situation. On the quiet country-side, far removed seemingly from the world of strife, the representatives of all nations were gathered together to follow what in all countries and in all ages has been the "sport of kings." It was a picturesque scene, bright with the brightness of the brilliant sunshine and the dazzling blue of a North China autumn day, modern with the fashions and manners of the great cities of the twentieth-century world, and instinct with that animation and charm which is the characteristic of the gatherings of people from many lands. A few miles away lay the last of those great capitals of the East, still shrouded in her veil of mystery, which was destined so soon to be so rudely rent and torn away. Somewhere within her walls was the unfortunate victim of a false estimate of forces and of a Government conscienceless and without shame. His enemies surrounded him, demanding the immediate forfeit of his life by those swift and silent processes which the immemorial customs of the East still sanctioned. And in the meantime the representatives of those foreign nations, who only within his own memory had been successful in forcing his ancient and proud country to accord them proper recognition, were devising means to assist a fallen Minister in his sore strait.

It transpired later that as a precautionary measure Sheng had been brought into the Legation quarter earlier in the day and was safe, for the moment at any rate, from the machinations of his enemies. The question was how to see him to a permanent place of safety.

At the call of his Majesty's Minister, Sir John Jordan, the matter was taken in hand by the representatives of those four countries which had been concerned in the recent Four Nations Loans, that is to say, the Ministers of Great Britain, France, Germany, and the United States, and of Japan, who had been concerned in the small loan a short time earlier. Their justification for interference was the

cause of humanity and justice, to which was added perhaps a sense of their own responsibility. Sheng Hsüan Huai had, throughout his short period of office, acted straightforwardly and along the lines of statesmanlike policy. If it offended the people, or a stronger faction than his own, the remedy lay in his displacement, which had already been accomplished. His unpopularity had been increased by the fact that his policy had included as a principal feature the raising of foreign loans. In this altogether essential matter, the critics of the Government in China were not influenced by considerations of reason. They did not realise that, as will be shown later on to be the case, the basis of progress in China is sound finance, and that possibly a sound financial position can only be achieved by the discriminating use of foreign money. Many observant foreigners and the foreign Powers, apart from the immediate interest of some of them, strongly approved the principle of Sheng's schemes. They could not now stand by, impassive spectators of his destruction.

It was decided that the best thing would be to get him away to Tientsin and thence on a German steamer to Tsingtao. It would be less difficult to do this now, perhaps, than later on.

The arrangements were quickly made. A special train was unobtrusively prepared. A small foreign guard, consisting of two picked men of the Legation Guards of the five interested nations, was got together, and it was arranged that the party should be in charge of the Chinese Secretary of the British Legation, Mr. Barton, and the Chinese Secretary of the American Legation, Dr. Tenney.

These arrangements were completed early in the evening, but it was deemed advisable not to start till a later hour, when the chance of escaping observation would be greater. The time selected was between ten and eleven o'clock, when the streets of the Legation quarter are most deserted. There was only a short distance to go. Sheng had spent the day in the Yokohama Specie Bank, which is on Canal Street, some two hundred yards within the historic Water Gate. The station of the line to Tientsin lies on the outside of the wall of the Tartar City, between the Water Gate and the Chien Men, the great central gate, beyond the limits of

the Legation quarter, and therefore open to attack by Chinese should any idea of the plan have got abroad. It appeared, however, that no inkling of Sheng's flight had leaked out. Either his enemies did not know that he had left his home, or assumed him to be in hiding in one of the foreign Legations. Besides which, at this time, without Imperial complicity, they were not in a sufficiently strong position to enforce their will. In the daytime the station can be approached from either side, but at night the great gates are closed, and only by special arrangement with the railway authorities can access be obtained through the Water Gate.

The party got away in safety, and between one and two in the morning arrived in Tientsin. Here they were met by closed carriages, while a few Japanese soldiers were on the platform. They were then driven to the wharf in the German Concession, where lay the *Admiral von Tirpitz.* Sheng Kung-pao immediately went on board, and the vessel sailed at daybreak for Tsingtao, the port of German-leased territory in Shantung.

The whole episode afforded as painful a spectacle as it will be a memorable experience for those who were privileged to share it. While still in Peking, and before his enemies, the fallen Minister bore his misfortunes with dignity and calm. It was only after he had quitted the stage that it could be seen how utterly overwhelmed he was by the blow which had fallen. He could not fail to realise that in all human probability the end for him had come. Aged and broken, with the sands of life rapidly running out, the prospect before him was a gloomy one. Full of years but deprived of honours, the future could hold no hope. The wheel of Fortune, with all her fickleness, could scarce turn up for him again. He had played a strong part and played it boldly, and in the absence of evidence, who may say, in its final act, not honestly? But his enemies had triumphed, and as the train, not the least significant emblem of the westernisation of China and of the associations of his own career, rushed him through the darkness of the night from the historic capital of his country on his way to a haven of refuge in a foreign-owned strip of China seaboard, bitter indeed must have been his reflections.

And there we must leave him, remembering that if the canons of Western morality must condemn many of his methods there is much to be found in his career that is admirable. That he had a great talent for administration, courage, and a sense of the need of progress, will not be denied. Finally, the circumstances of his end excited emotions which obscured his faults, while he himself exhibited a composure in misfortune which, as Macaulay wrote of a far greater but scarcely more scrupulous Englishman, "has half redeemed his fame."

CHAPTER XIV

FIRST DEVELOPMENTS IN THE COUNTRY

THE history of the Revolution is to a large extent the history of events occurring simultaneously in a great variety of different places. In attempting a coherent record it is inevitable that some of the striking incidents of the moment should escape attention. Despite their interest locally and the tragic importance they unfortunately too often had for the unoffending and frequently uninterested people, they naturally shrink into insignificance in comparison with the great issue of which they were merely incidents.

The movement, if it be allowed to indulge in a contradiction in terms, tended to have three centres of gravity. In the first place there was the arena of the "Three Cities," where the issue was being submitted to the stern arbitrament of arms. Next there was Peking, the stronghold of Imperialism, which still exercised the influence of which mystery and tradition are never wholly deprived. Finally, there was the feeling in the country at large, which manifested itself at this point and that, until more than half the provinces seemed ablaze with Republican feeling, which tended gradually to focus itself, up to a certain point, in Shanghai and at a later stage at Nanking.

Some account has now been given of the state of the rival forces and of their positions in the field preparatory to the great battle that was shortly to be fought between them. Similarly the course of events centring in Peking during the early days of revolution have been traced. It now remains to attempt an impression of the first developments in the country at large, amongst that vast and patient people who represent the real China.

During the first few days after the outbreak at Wuchang the reports of risings in other parts of the country were numerous and startling. As time went on, however, it became clear that, though signs were not lacking of grave unrest and a sense of insecurity existed in many places, there had not as yet been any actual rising. And when a week passed without serious demonstrations outside the disaffected area, the idea began to gain ground that the movement was perhaps not so widespread as had at first been supposed.

That this was not the true explanation soon became manifest, the apparent impassivity of the revolutionary party at other points being due to very different causes. In the first place, as we know, it was ascribable to the general instructions which had been given to watch the course of developments before taking the grave step of rising in arms against the established order, and authentic news spread slowly. The use of the Imperial Post and the Imperial Telegraph Administration, always dangerous vehicles for the transmission of secret instructions, was now out of the question. The various committees had to rely much on special messengers, and in a country of great distances communications by such means are of necessity comparatively slow. Again, the nature of the revolutionary organisation inevitably left much to chance, the leading spirits of the movement not having the necessary forces at their disposal immediately to declare themselves. In the southern provinces this was not such a serious matter, as the people in the larger centres were impregnated with the new doctrines sufficiently to enable a substantial demonstration to be engineered within a tolerably short space of time. But in the North, with few exceptions, it was otherwise. Among the men whose adherence it was hoped to gain when the time came there was a variety of shades of opinion, which made it essential that a strong and successful movement must first be made against the common enemy in order to weld into one sufficiently harmonious whole the existing factions. A great deal depended too, throughout the country, on opportunities to bring about risings of the army. It has been shown how this contingency had been foreseen, and how for some years a systematic campaign had been carried on amongst the troops, with the result that they

included amongst the officers and men of all ranks a substantial number of adherents. They were, however, often scattered, and the directors of the movement had to exercise a large measure of caution in order to make the most of their available forces. Finally, the premature nature of the outbreak found men to some extent unprepared.

The Treaty Port of Ichang on the Yangtze was the first to declare for the new order, the Revolutionary party taking over without much difficulty during the night of the 18th. This was thoroughly in accordance with expectation. It was not necessary to be in possession of revolutionary secrets to know that the Yangtze Valley was already widely influenced by revolutionary propaganda. That Ichang should be followed by the fall of Changsha, the capital of Hunan, one of the centres of gravest disaffection through the Government railway policy, on the 22nd, and of Kiukiang on the 23rd, caused no surprise. But the news of the conversion of Hsianfu, the capital city of the Province of Shensi, constituted for a time one of the wonders of the whole campaign.

Hsianfu is one of the most ancient cities of the Empire. Formerly known as Ch'ang An, the "City of Continuous Peace," its records go back nearly three thousand years. Many times the capital, the city of refuge of the Imperial Court in 1900, history and tradition seemed to stamp it as a stronghold of Imperialism, while its remote position suggested it as one of the last places that would have attracted the attention of the revolutionary propagandists.

The consideration of these things resulted in the formulation of elaborate theories of complicated military tactics. A deep design was attributed to the revolutionary leaders of commanding the strategic point at the angle of the Yellow River, where, coming from the north, it suddenly sweeps due east. Here, at T'ungkuan, the "Barrier at the Passage," one of the few places for effecting a satisfactory crossing of the treacherous river, crosses the ancient Trade Route to the West. With the famous Yellow River Bridge in Imperialist hands, eventually perhaps to be destroyed, it seemed necessary for the revolutionaries to keep open a route to Peking, should developments necessitate a northward march. Hence, if ordinary canons of reasoning applied, the fall of Hsianfu.

But it was not a case of the application of ordinary canons of reasoning. Like so many other occurrences during the Revolution, suggestive of some deep laid scheme, the fall of Hsianfu was as purely fortuitous as anything that happened. If anything the local committee was weaker there than in other places. But, on the other hand, if there was an Imperial tradition it was of an ancient Chinese and not of a comparatively modern and alien Imperialism. Again, the surrounding country, even in normal times, is infested with banditti, and the city itself contains a turbulent element in its population of considerable proportions. Thus always ready for any trouble, if anything anti-Manchu by sentiment and anti-official by profession, they formed a ready instrument for working the revolutionary will. As events will show, however, it proved a dangerous and uncontrollable weapon, and produced consequences which should have been foreseen, and for which the revolutionary leaders, despite their own proposed moderation, must bear their share of blame.

The circumstances of the fall of Hsianfu were very different to those of the other cities. Ichang, Kiukiang, and Changsha but reflected the normal course that was destined to be followed in many other places. Local conditions made for some variations, but generally speaking the revolutionaries declared themselves, and within a few hours they had become, a *de facto* local government, often at the expense of but little bloodshed. But in the city once known as the "City of Continuous Peace," it was a tale of fire and sword, of rapine and unspeakable excesses of every kind.

At Ichang the Revolutionary party took over quietly, on the 18th of October, the local officials surrendering their charges without question. The only official victim, as far as personal injury was concerned, was a writer in the tax office, who was shot in the shoulder. A little damage was done to one of the prisons, the occupants of which, on hearing that all other prisoners had been liberated, demanded their liberty too. On this being refused, they are credibly reported to have broken up the prison, a curious comment on the gaol system, and in the struggle one man was killed and three injured. Beyond these incidents there was an entire absence of bloodshed. Indeed, the railway coolies

represented the only difficulty in the situation. These numbered some fifteen thousand, whom the threatened stoppage of work on the Szechuen line would throw out of employment. But this was not the whole of the trouble. The stores of rice were rapidly approaching exhaustion, and the banks, always the first victims, having closed their doors in anticipation of lawlessness, the notes in which the coolies' wages were paid had become, for the time being at any rate, valueless. On this score the situation remained acute for weeks; but the revolutionaries as such at no time gave cause for uneasiness.

At Kiukiang the transfer was effected with a similar absence of serious trouble. For a week, according to an account given in a private letter, things had been just touch and go. There seemed to be no doubt in the mind of everybody that Kiukiang would fall; the only question was, when? The Taotai, the principal local official, a Manchu, had got his family away several days before, handing over his authority to the Provincial Judge, who had arrived from Nanchang, and had been missing ever since—some said fled, too, others that he had been hidden away in the city. When the change came there was no disorderliness, and not even a fire, except that a couple of rooms in the Taotai's yamen were burnt out, the official papers being all destroyed. "The coup," continued this account, "was splendidly arranged. The streets were cleared. Sentinels and patrols everywhere. Special guards sent to the missions. All the officials were allowed to escape, even the Manchu Prefect. There was no bloodshed. Proclamations in the name of the Wuchang Commander-in-Chief, Li, were posted everywhere, the eight rewards and punishments being identical with those promulgated in Wuchang."

Turning now to a consideration of events in Changsha, it will be seen that these illustrate in a remarkable manner the methods of the revolutionaries and the sources of Government weakness. "Back in March or April last," wrote the Changsha correspondent of the *North China Daily News*, one of that able band of close observers in daily touch with events at every important point in the interior of China to whom is owed, through the medium of the premier China newspaper, so much of what we know of the happenings at

distant places, "there appeared one Chiao T'a Feng, who was an uncaptured revolutionary in the unsuccessful rising that was attempted in Liuyang some five years ago. He was reputed to be connected with the Sun Yat Sen party. He has at times posed as a Japanese priest; at times as a 'Hail fellow, well met' companion of the Imperial troops, with a well-filled purse, able and willing to lend a few dollars to this man, or a few tens of dollars to that lieutenant or petty officer. Able, also, like all his kind from the days of Absalom, to promise all sorts of desirable things when the right men were in office.

"For a long time there has been a great deal of jealousy between the two different kinds of troops which it has pleased the governing authorities to maintain in this province. The 'new troops' or regulars,* are connected with the National Army, the regiments stationed in Changsha being numbered the 49th and 50th in proper succession. On the other hand, the provincial militia are purely ruled from within the province. The officers of the new troops are trained men who have passed through the military schools. The officers of the militia are merely experienced men who have risen from the ranks. The new troops are better drilled, better paid, better housed, and better armed than the militia. There has been no bond or connection whatever between the two kinds of troops. The new men do not disguise their contempt for the militia; the militia have not disguised their impotent hatred of the new troops. The late General of the regulars was most urgent in his condemnation of the folly of one Government supporting two mutually antagonistic kinds of troops. One argument only could be imagined in support of the absurd arrangement: suppose one set of troops turned against the Government, the other might take the side of the Government. The argument was naturally not used in public; but there is no need to doubt that it was the guiding principle of the authorities.

"A curious piece of nemesis prevented the proper working of the argument in practice. The recently appointed Governor, like all his predecessors within the memory of man, had brought a number of friends for whom office

* Generally referred to in these pages as the Model Army.

was a necessity. Amongst these was a military officer named Huang. He was appointed to the generalship of the militia. In his turn General Huang had friends; and he managed to introduce five colonels. Even militiamen, however, had feelings; consequently when the new Governor dealt out ammunition to them and not to the regulars, whom he distrusted, and when he increased their numbers and decreased the numbers of the regulars by sending out hundreds of the latter and calling in hundreds of the former, their feelings kept them neutral instead of letting them be, as it was hoped they would be, loyal to the established order.

"Hence it came to pass that when on the night of Wednesday, the 18th, the regulars made a big fire outside the city walls, the militia would not open the gates; but when on the following Sunday morning the regulars marched out from their barracks fully armed, they did not shut the gates.

"The regulars marched in through the northernmost of the two east gates, which is not only the nearest to their barracks, but also the nearest to the Governor's yamen. The Governor came out to his front doors to meet them, accompanied by the militia General Huang. A glance was sufficient to show that his guards were outnumbered and hopelessly unable to do anything against the forces that the regulars had brought against him. So giving the order not to fire, he left the place, walked back into his yamen, and went through a hole in the wall that he had already prepared. The General was seized and led off to summary execution at the east gate."

It appeared from the more detailed account of Mr. Bertram Giles, H.M. Consul at Changsha, in regard to the immediate circumstances of the conversion, that the local representatives of revolutionary ideas made no sign for a few days after the outbreak at Wuchang. But on the 16th of October they seem to have been reinforced. On the evening of that day "a Japanese steamer arrived with over 1,000 passengers on board, among whom were said to be a large number of revolutionary leaders who had come to start the movement at Changsha, and the following day a distinct change in the situation was perceptible. It was

rumoured that the police intendant, a Mongol, had disappeared, as also a Manchu colonel.

"The ammunition of the regular troops, who were known to be in sympathy with the movement, was withdrawn from them and deposited in the adjacent arsenal. The gendarmerie,* on the other hand, who were said to be loyal and who had been promised large rewards, were fully armed. Their garrisons in the outlying districts were gradually brought into Changsha, while the regular troops were drafted away in small companies and distributed over the province."

The first overt movement was made on the night of the 18th, when the regulars, whose barracks were situated outside the east gate, attempted to enter the city. Setting fire to the straw stored in their stables, they doubtless anticipated that the city gates would be opened for the fire engines, but in this they were disappointed. "The gendarmerie, who preserved a neutral attitude throughout, did nothing. In the confusion, however, the regulars managed to recover some 20,000 rounds of ammunition from the arsenal. These the Customs' Taotai tried to get back the next day, but the General declined to give them up, and further refused to allow any more of his soldiers to be drafted away from Changsha."

This was on the morning of the 19th of October. Two uneventful days followed, and then on the morning of the 22nd the deceptive calm came to an end. The revolutionaries declared their hand. Fortunately there was no opposition, and "by 2 p.m.," to adopt the concluding words of the same excellent account, "the whole city was in the hands of the revolutionaries without a shot having been fired, the white flag was flying everywhere, guards with white badges on their sleeves were patrolling the streets to keep order, and the excitement of the morning subsided as quickly as it had risen. Once the movement had become a *fait accompli*, the gendarmerie also donned the white badge and helped to preserve order.

"Later in the day a communication was received from the revolutionaries, notifying the establishment of a Provisional Government, guaranteeing the protection of foreign

* Referred to in the other account as the militia.

life and property and the recognition of loans and indemnities, and requesting the observance of neutrality on the part of British subjects." *

With the capital city, there also passed out of Imperial control the important province of Hunan. Rich, populous, with its people reputedly made of the sternest stuff in China, it was a serious blow to the Manchu cause, while the ease and orderliness with which the change had been accomplished gave further evidence of the effectiveness and judgment of the revolutionary plans. Despite the loose-knit nature of their organisation and their large measure of dependence on chance, the soil had been so well prepared by propaganda, working upon the seeds of discontent so freely sown by Manchu rule, that only the signal was necessary for men to rise.

The restraint exhibited was typical of many other places. But unfortunately it was by no means universal, and the course of events at Hsianfu, as has been intimated, presented a spectacle of horror which might well have been a scene from any of the great massacres of history.

"Hsianfu was given over to all the evil passions of a people whose only civilisation is a veneer."

Such were the terms deliberately chosen by a man impressed, it is true, by proximity, and perhaps disproportionately, but yet a man whose life had been given to the country and whose training and sacred calling made for indulgence and sympathy, a man who must have desired to think and speak well of the civilisation of a people amongst whom his lot had thus voluntarily been thrown.

It is a serious indictment, but it was based on serious facts. The rising had been initiated by the local revolutionary organisation, which derived its chief support from the military and other colleges and the army. But, as has been already recorded, alone they could never have accomplished their objective. They were compelled therefore to rely largely upon the lower elements for the force that would see them through. These, however, far outweighed the strength and influence of the revolutionary committee who had organised the movement, and though they were content to leave the nominal administration of the city and

* White Book, China, No. 1 of 1912, p. 84.

the theoretical direction of events with them, they had no intention of losing their opportunities for enrichment and the gratification of the cravings of their lower natures. The control of the situation thus passed from the more educated element into the hands of the mob, and a reign of terror was inaugurated, the city being surrendered to slaughter, looting, and incendiarism. For three days, it is said, the mad orgy lasted, and then authority seemed to reassert itself. The execution of looters followed, but nothing seems to have been done to check the anti-Manchu excesses which at the same time had been going on. Their slaughter went on slowly but surely. "No humane sentiments of pity," ran the missionary account from which we have already quoted, "could stay their dreadful fate; lust only, in the case of women, extinguished the thirst for blood. The Manchurian city—the north-east quarter of the actual city—is a grave. Shot down, sabred, committed suicide, burned alive, fled to be butchered elsewhere, with the exception of the women survivors, after a week's slaughter, a population estimated between 20,000 and 30,000 has disappeared. Had not the usurpers used all their endeavours to protect us we would have gone with the rest, victims to the instinctive hatred of foreigners and hellish jealousy of the Christian religion.*

"Mr. Henne, a German postmaster in the Chinese service, was attacked with rifles and swords in the street, but lives after receiving eleven wounds. Mr. and Mrs. Smith, in the eastern suburbs, tried to escape, but were beaten back, Mr. Smith with both arms broken. In the west suburb a lady and a man, both teachers, and six boys and girls, twelve to fifteen years of age, were slaughtered. Outside the city, all the province was given over to anarchy.

"The democratic manhood of China is enrolled in secret societies, especially the military element and the mountaineers. They go by different names—the Chuang Ho ('Wide-spreading as the waters of the universe') and the Ko Lao Hui ('The Old Brothers'). Their motto might well be 'War on Mankind.' A salutary dread of the law may

* The terms of this sentence as part of an account are doubtless properly reproduced, but they appear to the present writer to overstate the case.

keep their evil propensities dormant, but, the law once relaxed or become powerless, all their savage instincts burst forth, the rest of mankind become a prey, they scour the country in bands, terrorising, pillaging, killing if it please them, and burning."

Amongst the victims beyond the limits of the city were some Swedish missionaries. It was no ordinary tragedy. An attack was made by one of these marauding bands on the Swedish Missionaries' School. The brave lady who was in charge, a Mrs. Beckman, with all but one of her own children, together with the other children in the school and an assistant teacher, were brutally murdered. The unfortunate husband of this lady, with his little child, contrived to escape capture and ultimately reached a place of safety. According to an account based on a statement which he subsequently gave, the tragedy occurred at midnight and, as it appeared, "was wholly unexpected, even though the city had been in a dreadful uproar in consequence of the massacre of Manchus by the revolutionaries. When the robbers appeared at the house the native servants placed ladders on each side of the wall surrounding the building. Mr. Vatne, one of the teachers, endeavoured to escape with one of Mr. Beckman's children. He ascended a ladder, but, finding the other one gone, he jumped the wall and got away on horseback with the child in his arms. He was followed and captured at a distance of twenty li and both were killed. Mr. Beckman had a wonderful escape with his infant in his arms. Seeing the robbers slaughtering all whom they met, his wife and several of the pupils, he rushed out with his infant in his arms and took refuge in an outhouse. Afterwards he made his way stealthily to an orchard, and there stood waist-deep in a pool with the little one in his arms, while the ruffians searched for him with lighted torches. Not finding him after a long search, though he saw every movement they made, they eventually made off, and Mr. Beckman ventured into his house, where he saw his wife and six children shockingly mutilated. As soon as the revolutionaries heard of the outrage they scoured the country for the dastardly band, but with what result is not known." *

The receipt of the news of these tragic events, especially

* *Peking and Tientsin Times.*

the first accounts, which were far more serious as regards the extent of the loss of foreign life than the actuality, aroused the strongest feelings of anger and indignation, and for a time seemed to promise foreign complications. At that time their significance, or rather lack of significance, had not been properly appreciated. It was not realised that, lamentable as they were, they formed no part of an anti-foreign movement, and were instances of those tragedies which are inevitable in a country where Government control is weak and people of alien race insist on working at distant places. The question to which the Beckman tragedy in particular gives rise is not so much one of Chinese responsibility for foreign life, important as this aspect of the matter is, as the old question for ourselves: Whether it be right that women and children should be exposed to such tremendous risks, and if men are justified in allowing it.

The revolutionary excuse for the events at Hsianfu was that "their plan was good, but their execution faulty." It is not thus, however, that men can evade their responsibilities, and those who will let loose the forces of disorder cannot expect to escape the consequences of their failure to keep them under due control.*

* The sequel to the events at Hsianfu was the organisation of an expedition by nine brave men, who, taking their lives in their hands, set out to rescue the foreigners who still remained. A modest account of this highly successful expedition by its leader, Mr. A. de C. Sowerby, will be found in Appendix A.

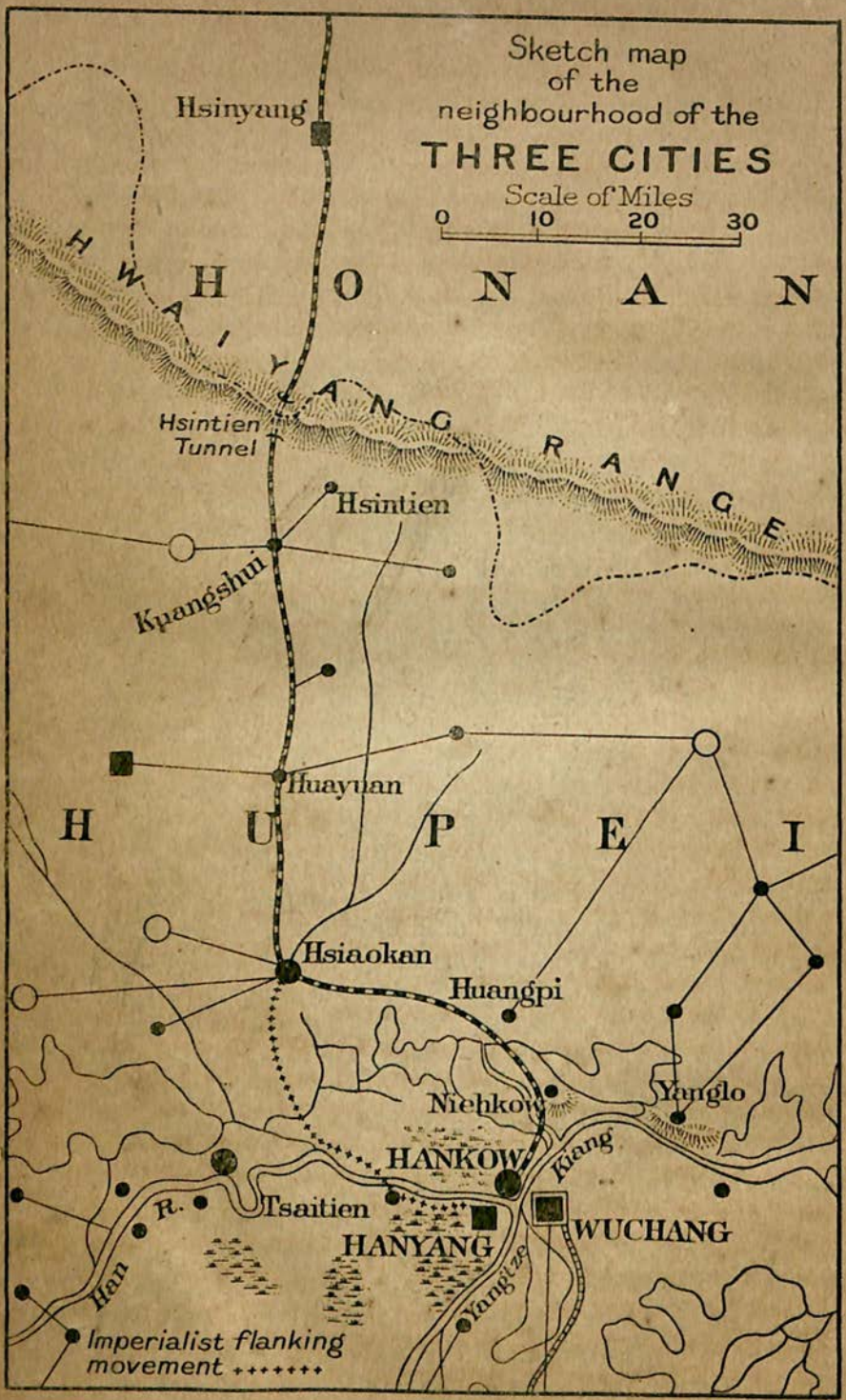
CHAPTER XV

THE STRUGGLE FOR HANKOW

AS far as appearances went and the effect on the country was concerned the initial operations, as has been seen, were in favour of the revolutionaries, who were left on the 19th of October in undisputed possession of the country between the Han River and the Seven Mile Creek. The comparatively small force of loyalists who had been in the field in the neighbourhood of Wuchang had evacuated their position at Kilometre Ten and retired temporarily northward, with a view to keeping communications open for the advance of the Imperialist army.

General Yin Ch'ang, the Minister of War, had left Peking on the 15th, and after a halt at Paotingfu for the purpose of conferring with General Wu Lu Chen, the Commander of the 6th Division, which for the present was to remain at its present station, he pushed on to Changtefu in Honan, the home of Yuan Shih K'ai. There, it is reported, these two officials had a conference extending over five hours. Thence he pushed on to Hsinyang, a district city of some importance on the railway, 136 miles north of Hankow. This place, where he arrived on the 18th, was for the time being made the base. The city had already been occupied by a body of troops which had been dispatched from Paotingfu on the 13th. Similarly the safety of the Yellow River Bridge and of the Hsintien tunnel had been secured by an adequate guard.

The importance of these measures from an Imperial standpoint cannot be over-estimated. Without the famous bridge the transport of a modern army across "China's Sorrow" would have been difficult in the most favourable circumstances; in the face of an active enemy it might


Sketch map
of the
neighbourhood of the
THREE CITIES
Scale of Miles
0 10 20 30
Hsinyang
HWAIYANG RANGE
HONAN
Hsintien Tunnel
Hsintien
Kuangshui
Huayuan
HUPEI
Hsiaokan
Huangpi
Niehkow
Yanglo
HANKOW
Kiang
Tsaitien
R.
Han
HANYANG
WUCHANG
Yangtze
Imperialist flanking movement

fairly be regarded as impossible. The command of the tunnel, it will be seen, was scarcely less essential.

The arrival of the main body of troops at Hsinyang meant that the danger of the advance guard, which had been hurriedly thrown forward for the protection of the bridge, proving inadequate was a thing of the past. When on the 22nd the base was pushed forward to Huayuan a section of the Imperialist advance only second in importance to the safe passage of the Yellow River Bridge had been accomplished. Hsinyang is the most southerly point of importance in the Great China plain, which, with only one break in the shape of the coastal province of Shantung,* lies between the mountain ranges of Western China and the sea, and stretches from where the Mongolian plateau begins to rise in the north to the Hwaiyang Range, which effects a natural boundary between the provinces of Honan and Hupei. The Hwaiyang Range rises to a height in places of nearly 6,000 feet, and on the safe passing beyond it depended the Imperialists' chance of engaging the revolutionaries at an early date, on which so much seemed to depend.

The railway passes beneath the range by means of a tunnel about 25 miles to the south of Hsinyang, or 112 miles from Hankow. Had General Li been in a position to push on and hold the tunnel the advance of the Imperialists would have been incalculably delayed, with results which in the light of subsequent events have now no interest, but which would then have seemed of great material and moral consequence.

By October the 24th, headquarters had passed from Huayuan to Hsiaokan, only 45 miles from Hankow, and in a telegram dated from that place on October 25th it was announced by General Yin Ch'ang that the main body of the Imperialists had moved forward to Niehkow, some six or seven miles from Kilometre Ten, and that he himself was following. He added the information that there had been a number of skirmishes, but that the Imperial Army would not engage in a big battle until their position was thoroughly consolidated.

The advance beyond Niehkow should have been made an

* The Province of the Eastern Mountains.

extremely difficult thing for the Imperialist forces. The country is marshy and intersected by three substantial streams, the waters of Seven Mile Creek, indeed, being scarcely inferior to the Huangpu, on which stands Shanghai. For all practical purposes an advancing body of troops can only move along the railway. There is no room for a flanking movement, and no other way to Hankow except by falling back on Hsiaokan and making a long detour, a manœuvre which at this stage and in these circumstances would have been equivalent to defeat and seriously damaging to the Manchu prospects.

Had the revolutionaries been well led and taken advantage of the opportunities which time and position gave them, they must at the least have opposed at this point an obstacle the removal of which could only have been secured at heavy cost.

The revolutionaries, however, neither took advantage of their opportunities nor did their energies seem to be directed by officers trained in the methods of scientific warfare. Instead of entrenching themselves, with shelter pits for artillery, and creating a series of those strong river positions which were so frequently met with by the British in the Boer War, they seemed to attach a merely secondary importance to the three creeks, and concentrated their efforts in these days on strengthening their position at Kilometre Ten. It is true that they did some entrenchment work at Seven Mile Creek on October 20th, but generally speaking they seemed to be impressed by the hopelessness of attempting much on these lines in view of the Imperialist command of the fleet, which made a weak position of what would otherwise have been a strong one. This danger, however, might have been greatly decreased. If the revolutionaries had done at this stage that which only seemed to occur to them a week later, that is to say have taken up a strong artillery position on the Wuchang shore opposite the creeks, they would have covered their own positions and greatly hampered the operations of the fleet. But perhaps the greatest mistake of all was the omission to blow up the bridges and destroy the line. One wonders where the sappers and miners were, and why they were not active, availing themselves of this

invaluable opportunity. The fact seems to have been, however, that the lack of confidence in Li Yuan Hang paralysed serious military effort and left the direction and carrying out of operations in the hands of untrained men, who, apart from the absence of technical knowledge, were either too surprised at the extent of their initial successes to take advantage of them, or, a little lacking in the courage of their convictions, feared to drive them home.

So much for the general position. It is less easy to describe the operations that took place during these days, almost wasted days as they were on the revolutionary side, from the military standpoint. It was difficult for foreigners to get near the scene of operations, and such Chinese statements as are available as to these minor operations, which should have had such a great importance and had none, are obviously exaggerated and of little value.

The following movements, however, are sufficiently clearly substantiated. On the 21st of October, apparently following up, though tardily, the retirement of General Chang Piao on the 19th, the revolutionaries pushed on towards Niehkow, which by this time was occupied by the Imperialist advance forces. The revolutionaries took up a position on either side of the railway along the creek farthest away from Hankow, at the point where it is spanned by the San Tao Ch'iao, or the third bridge, as it may be more conveniently referred to in contradistinction to the first or Seven Mile Creek bridge and the second bridge over the middle creek. The Imperialists were strongly posted in the low hills a little in front of Niehkow, to the right or river side of the railway, which they effectively command.

It was a strong and thoroughly sound position, and it may well be supposed that General Yin Ch'ang had selected it as his final base of operations on that account. It was scarcely within human reason that he should have imagined that his advance beyond that point would be allowed to be effected with so little substantial opposition.

On this position the revolutionaries directed an ineffectual bombardment during the 21st and 22nd. On the 23rd the Imperialists, reinforced from the rear, made a forward move: A sharp action took place, which resulted in the retirement of the revolutionary forces from their position at the third

bridge to the neighbourhood of Seven Mile Creek, where they took up a position in the Government paper-mills, on the Niehkow side, and in their trenches on that side of the creek which is nearer to Hankow.

During the night the Imperialists occupied the position at the third bridge vacated by the revolutionaries. They had also materially strengthened their artillery. Their experience of the previous day or so had taught them the range of the revolutionary guns, and they had now brought up a heavier gun, with which they hoped to clear the way for a further advance. The great desideratum of the Imperialist leaders was the command of the three bridges. Every day they remained in revolutionary hands increased the chance of their destruction.

In the cold greyness of the dawn the fight began. The revolutionaries had moved up from the paper-mills to the neighbourhood of the second bridge, and seemed for a time to be more than holding their own. But as the last shadows cleared away the new big Imperialist gun was brought into action, and soon wrought a change in the situation. The range had been nicely calculated, and just as the revolutionaries began to persuade themselves that they would shortly dislodge the Imperialists and drive them back on Niehkow, the Imperialist gunners commenced to drop shells in their midst. A disorderly retirement quickly followed, the revolutionaries falling back on their trenches at Seven Mile Creek and Kilometre Ten. The Imperialists occupied the paper-mills, and thus regained control of the railway up to Seven Mile Creek, causing the revolutionary retirement also from their trenches on the river side of the railway, which they now commanded.

Though the revolutionaries were pushed back and had many casualties, they were not discouraged. They had learnt a valuable lesson in the uses of artillery. During the rest of the day they engaged themselves in bringing fresh troops over from Wuchang, while they called on the resources of the Hanyang Arsenal for the supply of guns of a calibre which should enable them to hold their own.

Two days passed in comparative inactivity. On the one side, the revolutionaries were strengthening their position at Kilometre Ten, paying but little attention to that portion



Revolutionary Guns in action.



Imperialist Troops entrained for the Front.

of their trenches at Seven Mile Creek which they still occupied. On the other hand, the Imperialists waited for their main body.

It might well have been a period of great suspense, so much depended on the issue of the coming fight. But in view of recent developments there could be but little doubt as to the outcome; an Imperialist victory seemed assured. The revolutionaries, it is true, were strongly entrenched, and they had the comforting sense of proximity to their base, while the Imperialists had to advance across the open plain. The proportion of recruits, however, in the revolutionary ranks was too considerable to augur any great success. The Imperialists also had the advantage in the matter of artillery, both as far as guns were concerned and the men behind them, while finally they had the co-operation of the fleet, which commanded the position at Kilometre Ten even more effectively than the positions at Seven Mile and the other creeks.

The initial movement of what was to develop into a considerable battle took place just before dawn on the 27th, when a large Imperialist force advanced from Niehkow. In the meantime a small advance body had been sent forward to cross Seven Mile Creek and take up a position on the Hankow side. The movement was satisfactorily executed, the small advance body taking a position behind the Standard Oil Company's tanks unopposed. The revolutionaries had for some reason entirely abandoned their trenches at Seven Mile Creek, including those on the land side of the railway embankment, and concentrated at Kilometre Ten.

About six o'clock this advance guard made a sudden attack on a village in the neighbourhood of Kilometre Ten, driving out some 700 revolutionaries. By this time the main body had crossed the first bridge. Simultaneously their extended lines, supported by the men-of-war steaming slowly up-river almost abreast of them, pressed forward towards the revolutionary trenches at Kilometre Ten, which extended from near the river bank to the railway station and thence for some considerable way across the plain. The distance between the two forces, exclusive of the Imperialist advance guard, was something under three miles.

The Imperial troops on the field were the 3rd Infantry Brigade, fresh from the manœuvring ground at Yungpingfu, three batteries of the 2nd Artillery Regiment, two Maxim companies, and half the 2nd Cavalry Regiment, with the 8th Brigade, forming part of the 4th Division from Machang, the camp near Tientsin, in reserve. Their numbers may be set down at nearly 8,000 men. On the revolutionary side it is hard to estimate, but it is probable that the troops actually at the front were in inferior numbers.

In the early stages the principal work was done by the artillery, and it was supposed that Admiral Sah's fleet would simultaneously deliver a flank attack on Kilometre Ten. For some reason, however, which has not been explained, after manœuvring with the apparent object of getting into position, a retirement down-stream took place. The revolutionaries had some hope that this indicated an inclination to join them, or at least to hold aloof, and some claimed that one of the ships was flying the revolutionary flag. The hope, however, proved a vain one, for very shortly the ships returned, and about 9 o'clock opened fire in support of the Imperialist attack.

The firing from the fleet was extremely accurate, and for a time the revolutionaries were at a disadvantage in that Admiral Sah had taken up a position and commenced shelling from behind a Japanese warship, thereby preventing any revolutionary response except at the risk of international complications. As soon as the situation was appreciated by the Japanese commander of the vessel in question, the order was given to steam out of the line of fire. But the fortunes of the revolutionaries were not materially improved, and they continued to be subjected to a heavy artillery fire from three points at once—the fleet, the bridge over Seven Mile Creek, where the Imperialists had placed their big pieces of artillery, and the batteries which had taken up positions on the plain. Reports vary as to the revolutionary artillery practice. From the land side it appeared that their reply was disappointingly ineffective. Ships in harbour, on the other hand, reported it fairly accurate, a passing steamer stating that they saw one shell fall on the main deck of a cruiser. But even assuming this to be the case, though in a duel with the fleet the result

might have been a different one, as it was the odds were too great. The position rapidly became untenable.

In the meantime the Imperial land forces, finely led, were working their way across the plain in first-class style. In the face of a heavy rifle fire and machine guns pouring out their deadly hail, they came on in open formation as steadily as though, in the language of one eye-witness, "the occasion had been a sham fight at the Yungpingfu manœuvre ground."

As the Imperialist advance continued the revolutionary fire slackened and gradually died away. The revolutionaries were falling back on Hankow. From the configuration of the country, however, it was not possible for the Imperialists to be sure of what was happening. Though the revolutionary fire had dropped off, the railway embankment prevented their movements between the line and the river being followed from the plain. The loyalist advance on Kilometre Ten, therefore, had to be made with caution, which gave the revolutionaries time to fall back and prevented the Imperialists from taking full advantage of their victory. But for this circumstance the revolutionaries must have been badly routed. As it was, the retreat was generally speaking carried out coolly, and the revolutionaries were well away before the position at Kilometre Ten had once more changed hands.

But the fight of the morning was not quite over. "When the retreat seemed finished," ran an account in the *Central China Post*, "and the mounted scouts of the Imperialist force were coming along to about the line of the Concessions to find what they had won, a force of some three hundred blackcoats * was seen advancing on the landward side of the railway from the racecourse. It seemed possible that at last some leader on the revolutionary side might have received an inspiration and sent the men to cover the retreat of the rest, in order at the least to prevent the possibility of wholesale slaughter by the pursuers. But the foreigners watching them got rid of that idea when they saw the men rise from their cover and advance, apparently without any purpose, among a collection of huts. A squad

* The revolutionaries had adopted a deep blue uniform, which passed for black, while the Imperialist uniform was grey.

of loyalist mounted men was within a very short distance of them on the other side of the railway, and a lively skirmish seemed in prospect. But presently the foreigners watching the little foolhardy band saw them beating a double-quick retreat. It was learned afterwards that this was a corps of the 'Death or Glory Boys' who have sworn to sacrifice their lives in the revolutionary cause. They seem to have decided that the sacrifice could be made with greater advantage on another day."

The position at Kilometre Ten was captured by the Imperialists at about 11 o'clock. At about 2 in the afternoon they recommenced their advance. By the evening, after a stubborn resistance which showed the possession of both grit and determination in the revolutionary ranks, the loyalists captured the station at Ta Chih Men. The revolutionaries had fought bravely and well, but in the end training and discipline told, as it always must, and the close of the day found the Imperialists knocking at the gates of Hankow.

The casualties must have been considerable, but no reliable figures have been forthcoming on either side, and though great numbers of wounded were treated by foreign Red Cross workers,* the opportunities for foreign observation on the field were very limited.

Thus ended the first stage of the struggle for Hankow. To foreign observers the fighting came as something of a surprise. According to competent authorities, the Imperialists exhibited all the precision of a first-class modern fighting machine. Their operations were carried out on thoroughly scientific lines, and their *morale* seemed to be good. It has to be remembered, however, that the test was not a very severe one. The revolutionaries were defeated in the first instance by superior artillery, supported by the guns.

* It may conveniently be noted at this point that during the operations in the neighbourhood of the "Three Cities" very fine Red Cross work was done under the direction of local medical missionaries, a party from the Union Medical College at Peking, and a medical contingent from Shanghai. Unfortunately space prevents the inclusion of any record here of these valuable services, but it may be remarked that they were deeply appreciated by Chinese on both sides. It is such work that helps towards better understandings in China.

of the ships, which virtually enfiladed their position at Kilometre Ten. Their courage left nothing to be desired and their discipline was well maintained. Complaint was made by the rank and file of indifferent leadership, and the complaint seems to have been a just one. The material, though much of it was very raw, was good and full of spirit, but it was not used to the best advantage. There were also many tactical errors and omissions on this and the preceding days, while some bad mistakes were made in the matter of the provision of ammunition.

Nevertheless the revolutionaries had made a brave show, and it was destined that they would engage in many another gallant fight before surrendering that city to which they had now retired to take a fitful rest.

On the morning of the 28th the revolutionaries, recovered from their weariness of the previous day, and in nowise dispirited by the reverse they had sustained, issued forth from Hankow and delivered a vigorous attack upon the Imperial position at Ta Chih Men and forced a retirement. The Imperialists were clearly not expecting such an onslaught, and the afternoon had to be spent by them in retrieving the position. Night found the positions much as they had been at the close of the previous day.

On Sunday, the 29th, the struggle was renewed, the fight raging around the Sing Seng Road in unpleasant proximity to the British Concession, for the Sing Seng Road is a continuation of the Taiping Road, which forms the Concession boundary. The operations on this day were principally confined to street fighting, with disastrous results to the revolutionaries, whose casualties were estimated at no less than 500 killed and 1,500 wounded. The day went, as it must always do ultimately, in favour of the Imperialists, who, having routed the revolutionaries, turned to the more congenial occupation of looting, a proceeding which it must be confessed compared unfavourably with the restraint which had so far been exhibited by the soldiers of the People's Army.*

"And then," runs the account of an eye-witness which was published in the *North China Daily News*, "the

* It was from these days that dated the tale of inhuman excesses of which more than one Imperialist officer was heard to boast.

Imperialist troops retired to get drunk on their spoils. The result was that when they awoke next morning the revolutionaries were again in possession of the Sing Seng Road."

Had the Imperialists but known it, while they were thus engaged the opportunity presented itself of occupying Hankow, and probably Hanyang also, without being under the necessity of striking a single further blow or sacrificing another life. The result of this three days' fighting had thoroughly disheartened the revolutionaries. Disappointed by the continued loyalty of the northern army, they realised, from a military point of view, the hopelessness of their cause, at any rate in the region of the "Three Cities." Beaten and thoroughly dispirited, they poured out of Hankow, seized by a sort of panic, a desire at all costs to get away. At this time Hanyang was far from strongly held. Beyond a few gunners to support with the artillery on Tortoise Hill the revolutionary forces fighting for the mastery of Hankow, the garrison was trifling, and it is probable that while Hankow could certainly have been occupied on this night at every point, Hanyang might also have been rushed by a bold stroke silently and swiftly executed.

But the Imperialist opportunity which had come with the night had been lost by the morning. What seemed the darkest hour in the revolutionary fortunes was suddenly illumined by a ray of hope. A bright particular star had appeared in the political firmament at Wuchang. During the day the redoubtable revolutionary leader Huang Hsing, the courageous man who had always been found in the place of gravest danger, had contrived in disguise to reach headquarters and place himself at the disposal of General Li.

At the time of the outbreak Huang Hsing had been in Japan on revolutionary business, and its premature nature had for a time deprived the movement of that wisdom in council and resolution in action which were his principal characteristics. Huang Hsing was now in his fortieth year. A native of Changsha, he had received his education in the first instance in the college of the Liang Hu, as the Provinces of Hunan and Hupei in combination are called.



BLUE-JACKETS AT THE BARRICADES IN THE BRITISH CONCESSION AT HANKOW.



THE 124TH BALUCHISTAN INFANTRY PLAYING THE ROYAL INNISKILLING FUSILIERS TO THE STATION AT TIENTSIN, EN ROUTE FOR THE TRANSPORT WHICH WAS TO TAKE THEM TO INDIA ON THE 24TH OF OCTOBER, 1911.

They were, however, recalled during the day by telegram, and the barracks having in the meantime been occupied by the Somersetshire Light Infantry, they went under canvas in the Tientsin Recreation Ground.

Later on he had graduated at a Japanese University, curiously enough remaining unfamiliar with any European language, so that his knowledge of Western history and philosophy had to be gained through the medium of translations. Nevertheless, he commanded the respect and devotion of all grades of republican sentiment. "Revolution," runs one Chinese account, in its desire to be just to Huang Hsing characteristically unjust to others, "has been on men's lips for upwards of ten years, but Huang Hsing has been the only man of real action. Progressive in mind, brave and spiritual, he has devoted his life to the overthrow of the Manchu power."

Never was the arrival of a leader more opportune. Within a few hours the dispirited revolutionaries were streaming back again to their posts with new heart, filled by that wild enthusiasm which is inspired by a great name and the personal magnetism which makes leaders of men. At the same time Huang Hsing himself crossed to the Han Cities, assuming the command of the revolutionary forces in the field. Hankow was once more strongly occupied, and another day's Imperialist effort failed to make any substantial impression on its brave defenders.

The 31st of October, the last day in a month which had made such history, passed in comparative calm. Beyond a few stray shots from the Imperialist artillery and an occasional skirmish, it was a day for the tired soldiers to rest. The positions remained unchanged. For all practical purposes the Imperialists held the railway right up to the Han River, their artillery posted at Ta Chih Men and their camp at Kilometre Ten. The Chinese city of Hankow remained in revolutionary hands. *

* During these and subsequent operations foreign life and property at Hankow was at times exposed to some danger. No complications ensued, however, and therefore the part played by foreigners appears to have no place in the history of the Revolution. Nevertheless it should not go unrecorded that the Hankow Volunteers, in conjunction with such men as could be spared from the foreign warships from time to time in harbour, performed services which excited the admiration and respect of all, including military observers. Unfortunately, such foreign troops as were in China were required in the North and could not be spared to assist the Concessions at Hankow, where the police and patrol duties were most exacting.

CHAPTER XVI

THE DESTRUCTION OF HANKOW

IT is a maxim of warfare that a retiring enemy should, as far as circumstances permit, be allowed no opportunity of rallying his forces. Once on the run he should at all reasonable costs be kept moving. Unfortunately the Imperialists were not guided by this principle. The issue of the series of engagements which represented the fight for the mastery of Hankow had in reality been decided on the 27th of October. The defeat of the revolutionaries was decisive, and the superiority of the Imperialist fighting machine had been demonstrated beyond all question. Nevertheless, as we have seen, the fighting in connection with this phase continued for the best part of four more days without any substantial Imperial progress.

The apparent reason for this was that the loyalist soldiers undoubtedly despised their enemy and under-estimated their spirit. There were, however, other, if less obvious, causes.

It will be remembered that the supreme command had been originally vested in General Yin Ch'ang, the Minister of War. But on the 27th of October, the day of the main fight, an Edict had been issued superseding Yin Ch'ang, who was a Manchu, by Yuan Shih K'ai, as Generalissimo, and appointing General Feng Kuo Chang to the chief command in the field. At the same time Yin Ch'ang was ordered to return to the Ministry of War in Peking as soon as these changes had been effected. It will also be remembered that on the 17th of October Yin Ch'ang had had a long conference with Yuan Shih K'ai at Changtefu, when the plan of campaign had no doubt been discussed. Nor must it be forgotten that as early as the 19th of October an Imperial

Edict had been issued showing a distinct tendency to compromise.

This combination of facts opens up various possibilities. General Yin Ch'ang, whose dispositions had been admirable, might well have been somewhat piqued by the conditions stipulated for by Yuan and their acceptance. Or, if his appreciation of the political forces as they affected the Manchu House enabled him to sink his personal feelings, the temporary nature of his command must at least have paralysed his initiative. Or, again, he may have been hampered to some extent by his instructions, while it is also probable that Yuan Shih K'ai had instilled into his mind the desirability of a course of mild military measures, in the belief that but little was required to induce a settlement along the lines of compromise. Possibly, even, Yuan may have been controlling the situation from Changtefu. Finally, though slow to come out himself, Yuan, with the privity of the authorities, had already dispatched representatives to Wuchang secretly talking peace.

Unfortunately, these early negotiations broke down, serving only to show the unyielding nature of the revolutionary demands. It must, however, be placed to the credit of the Manchu side of the account that the central authorities were all for counsels of moderation. It may be that this attitude of mind was largely the outcome of fear, the absence from the ranks of strong men, and their self-sought dependence on Yuan Shih K'ai. Nevertheless the fact remains, and in justice to the Palace and also to Yuan Shih K'ai it must not be forgotten that the decision of the issue by trial of battle was forced by the revolutionary leaders.

Yuan Shih K'ai urged a settlement on the basis of a constitutional monarchy, which he was prepared to guarantee should be granted forthwith. The revolutionaries demanded a republic. In other words, they were set on encompassing the downfall of the Manchu Dynasty, and required the surrender of one of the most magnificent of inheritances.

To accede to such demands could scarcely be expected of the most pusillanimous. The House of Nurhachi might be effete. It might be that its part on the world's stage was well-nigh played out. But all trace had not yet been lost of

that spirit which had made of an obscure tribe the rulers for more than two hundred years over a third of the human race. They were prepared for great concessions,* but they were not prepared as yet to sign away their birthright. It had been won by the sword, and if the Chinese people insisted the attempt must be made by the same agency to retain it. Nor could Yuan Shih K'ai at this stage honourably propose any other course.

Thus the end of the month saw the situation described at the close of the last chapter. The revolutionaries continued to occupy Hankow with a courageous tenacity which shed lustre on their cause, and gave rise to an unsound estimate in the country of their military strength. Those who were not in a position to appreciate the true inwardness of the situation were in danger of being misled. It will not be denied that the spread of the revolt against the constituted authorities all over China was, in the first instance, in large measure invited by the weakness shown in high places. It was now encouraged by the apparent failure of the Imperialists to demonstrate their superiority. They had come from the North for the avowed object of re-establishing Imperial control in the "Three Cities," and here, three weeks later, they were still only knocking at the gates of Hankow. Some substantial military measure was necessary in order to establish their weakening prestige.

As regards the persons on the scene, by this time General Feng Kuo Chang had taken over the command in the field. General Yin Ch'ang was on his way back to Peking, and Yuan Shih K'ai had arrived, or was about to arrive, at the Imperial base, which remained at Hsiaokan.

It appears to have been now decided by the Imperialists that Hankow must at all costs be occupied. And so it came about that in the morning of November 1st commenced that series of operations which eventuated in its destruction.

So close to so great a tragedy it is not easy to form a just estimate of the circumstances under which it was played out. The Imperialists claimed it to have been a military necessity. To their critics it seemed one of the most ruthless acts that darken the pages of a history which contains many ruthless things. According to the view taken, so do

* *Cf.* Chapter XVII.

accounts of what occurred vary. On the one hand, the Imperialist troops are depicted as carrying out a necessary measure without undue barbarity. On the other, the story is shadowed by the lurid light of premeditated rapine and murder.

The truth is perhaps somewhere between the two. The continued occupation of Hankow by the revolutionaries was more than harassing. With their forward base at Kilometre Ten, the Imperial advance across the plain and thence across the Han to the attack of Hanyang would leave a long line of communications to be guarded. With Hankow in Imperialist hands, the task of keeping open their communications would be an easy one. Hankow occupied by revolutionaries, however, was a different matter. It afforded a base for flank attacks and cover for sniping and other irritating and dangerous tactics. Thus, if the campaign were not to develop into a farce, its occupation by the Imperialist forces may be fairly described as a military necessity. The question is as to the justification of the Imperialist measures. The distinction is of great importance. It is claimed by the Imperialists that the plan was to shell various points at which, according to information received, the revolutionaries were collected in force. The next step would be to clear a way through the city to the points which must necessarily be held. The most considerable thoroughfare of Hankow was that known as the Maloo, or Horse Road, in contradistinction to the narrow lanes which form the principal means of communication in a Chinese city. It ran at the back of the city from the British Concession, at the point where the Taiping Road becomes the Sing Seng Road, to the Han.* There was, however, no transverse road running to the Yangtze, and the idea was said to be to clear a way through the heart of the city which might give safe access to the river. The justification given for such an extreme measure was that in their previous attempts to take Hankow the Imperialist soldiers had been the victims of sniping on every side, not only at the hands of black-coat soldiers but by un-uniformed men.

The revolutionaries, on the other hand, charge the Imperialists with the deliberate intention to destroy, with the

* *Vide* plan.

wanton planning of a great sack. Against this, however, must be considered the position of Yuan Shih K'ai. The conclusion has been formed that Yuan Shih K'ai was honest in his intention to save the dynasty. Apart from his own sympathies and reputation, it is difficult to believe that he could ever have been a party to a move which could only have involved the most prejudicial consequences to the Manchu cause. The civilian must speak with caution of military operations and with respect of the stern considerations which make for their necessity. But on the facts, the conclusion may be ventured that the measures concerted for the Imperialist occupation of Hankow, in their inception and intended scope, constituted a justifiable military operation. Despite their terrible consequences, it was only in their subsequent developments that they appear to merit condemnation. But that condemnation, it must be admitted, cannot be too severe. At a time when the closest watch should have been kept on the operations, and discipline maintained at its strictest, the bonds were loosed and the greatest laxity allowed to prevail. Commenced on legitimate lines, a military measure was allowed to degenerate into an orgy of blood and fire.

This was due in large measure, of course, to that callousness to human suffering which is so marked a trait in Eastern peoples. It is also believed that certain Imperialist officers in the field, either for private motives or from sheer savagery, deliberately set themselves to encompass the terrible results which so rapidly ensued. Great credence, and with every appearance of justification, has been obtained in particular for the following story.

At Wuchang there had been a military official of the name of Tieh Chung. He did not command troops, his position being that of Tsen Yi Kuan, that is to say, military counsellor or adviser. Tieh Chung was a Manchu. At the time of the outbreak he was with the Viceroy. When the attack was made on the yamen he fled with Jui Ch'eng.

The immediate consequences of a successful rising were not then understood. Had it been appreciated there is no reason to suppose that Tieh Chung would not have sought to reach his family and make an attempt to save them. As

things fell out he himself reached safety, while his wife and children, according to the story, perished in the slaughter of Manchus which ensued.

When Yin Ch'ang arrived at the front, Tieh Chung became attached to his staff, with the result that on Yin Ch'ang being relieved as Generalissimo by Yuan Shih K'ai, with General Feng Kuo Chang in immediate command of the first army at the front, Yin Ch'ang recommended Tieh Chung to General Feng, to whom it would appear he became second in command.

In the constant defeat of the revolutionists and the fierce feelings engendered in the hearts of the Imperialist soldiery at the stubborn resistance to the occupation of the city, Tieh Chung, it is said, saw his opportunity for revenge. To him is attributed a deliberate plan to burn Hankow when the time came, and it is charged against him that he saw to it that there were no half-measures.

It is a picturesque if a barbaric story, and though it has about it a mediæval ring there is also a human touch. For Tieh Chung above all others it was a war of races, to be waged pitilessly and without mercy. He was a primitive man once more, with the cruel Tartar blood racing at fever heat throughout his veins.

Nor, it is said, was Brigadier-General Yi far behindhand, while General Feng Kuo Chang, whose Manchu sympathies, questions of loyalty apart, were notorious, could scarcely have remained long unaware of the developments which were taking place.

The bombardment of the city commenced, as has been already intimated, in the morning of the 1st of November, a steady rain of shells being poured on various points said to be strongly held by the revolutionary soldiers.* It continued for nearly two days more.

"The sight," ran the account of an eye-witness of the mighty conflagration which speedily ensued, "was simply appalling. A strong north-east wind was blowing, which rushed the flames along, pulling them out to a great length, and whenever they caught a high building they

* There is no doubt, and the point is of importance, that large numbers of revolutionary troops were in occupation of Hankow right up to the time of the bombardment.

seemed to enfold it, and in a few minutes it became a raging furnace. There had been no rain for a long time, and everything was bone dry. It soon became apparent that the city was doomed. The sun shone through the smoke with a ghastly glare, and as one thought of the luckless people in the streets fleeing for their lives, old folks and helpless women and children abandoned to their fate, and the valuable properties ruthlessly sacrificed, of the contents of the splendid shops and the great cargoes of merchandise stored in the godowns, including all the spare stock of food, the whole amounting to a sum the value of which cannot even be guessed at, so great must be the total, one's teeth involuntarily clenched as the word 'devils incarnate' sprang to the lips. And, as if this was not enough, the Imperial batteries kept busy showering shells on the doomed city.

"It was soon seen that churches, schools, hospitals, everything must go, and a gallant expedition was organised to try and bring out the pupils of the Wesleyan Girls' School, the school for the blind and the hundred odd patients in the Red Cross Hospital, but the launch was driven back from the Han, and another effort in the evening was found impracticable.

"Meanwhile the foreign Concessions were having their own share of alarms. The Imperialists for several days had had a battery of a dozen guns located at the Ta Chih Men crossing, and on the old golf course, where they were sheltered by the Concessions from the fire of the opposing forts on Hanyang Hill and at Wuchang. In attempting to reach these batteries the revolutionary fire had to cross the British Concession, and all the shells that fell short landed in it. Hence shells came dropping in all day long. The revolutionaries had agreed to give over firing if the Imperialist batteries could be removed from the protection of the Concession, and the officer in charge of the guns, on a Consular request, had undertaken to move them, but never did so. There were many narrow escapes from these falling shells, but fortunately no foreign lives were lost.

"The fire in the native city went on all day, but so vast was the area to be consumed that as night fell not one-



THE SING SENG ROAD AT HANKOW.



THE DESTRUCTION OF HANKOW.

third had been overtaken.* All Wednesday night (November 1st) it blazed, lighting up the sky and the whole countryside for miles around, but towards morning, the wind having fallen, it began to die down in the various sections, as it was checked by the fire walls. The first thing on Thursday, the morning of the 2nd, however, as the Imperialist batteries reopened with their big guns, was the sight of fresh pillars of smoke rising up all along the burned edge. We counted twelve starting off in as many minutes, and soon the whole inferno was in full blast again. Meanwhile, the revolutionary forts began to reply to the batteries and the shells, as before, to drop in the Concession. One entered a lady's bedroom window and smashed up the bed. Another exploded on the bund within a few feet of a passing foreigner, another struck a building on the Hwacheong road, exploding and sending a fragment about a pound weight whizzing past the ear of a Customs man, while quite a number of godowns were struck.

"The Concession was crowded with the fleeing refugees with their beds and boxes, and poor wretches were wandering about who appeared to have absolutely nowhere to go. The Imperial troops worked their way to the river and occupied the pontoons opposite to the China Merchants and Messrs. Butterfield and Swire, from which they took pot-shots at the poor people who were trying to escape in sampans, many of whom were wounded, and one to our knowledge shot dead. Inside the city the banks and the pawnshops were broken open and looting went on without restriction, Imperialist soldiers being often conspicuous in this performance. All day long a string of looters poured into the Concession, where, much to their disgust, the plunder was taken from them by the police.

"It is almost impossible for any one who has got red blood in his veins to write calmly about this atrocity. When the facts become known they will elicit a thrill of horror throughout the civilised world. 'What have we

* This account has been taken from the *Central China Post*, which, often brilliantly written, was not always quite just to the Imperialists. It will be noticed here and elsewhere an underlying assumption of a deliberate intention utterly to destroy, which is contrary to foreign military opinion observing the course of initial operations on the spot.

done,' said one of the leading men of the Chinese community to the writer, 'that we should be treated in this way by the mandarin soldiers? It is our rice they eat and our clothes they wear. Why should they trouble Hankow at all? Why did they give us no notice so as to remove a little food and clothing? They have not the hearts of men nor of beasts, but Heaven sees,' and the tears stood in his eyes. Yes, Heaven sees. The fire that burned Hankow may yet consume its authors. It is worse than a crime; it has been a blunder."

Such was the editorial account and the verdict of a newspaper that may be fairly described as at least partial to the revolutionary cause. Written at the heart of the tragedy and inspired by the appalling spectacle of ruin and desolation beneath the writer's eyes, it no doubt pictured truly enough, as far as words can picture, the misery entailed by the destruction of the city. But unfortunately the verdict overlooked many essential features. It forgot the immense revolutionary provocation *—the stubborn retention of the city, the sharpshooters in uniform and out, the immense difficulty and danger of operating in a huge network of narrow lanes, where everything helps the defender. Unnoted too went the fact that if primitive instincts reigned supreme, if the teachings of the humanising philosophy of Confucius, to which the Chinese owe so much, went for nought, it was not only on the Imperialist side. In justice it must not go unrecorded that during the fighting of these few days revolutionaries had killed their prisoners and the Red Cross flag had undoubtedly been abused.

Nevertheless it is not surprising that witnesses to so vast a tragedy found it difficult to make any allowance for the Imperialist point of view. In times of feeling men do not pause to reflect or indulge in any close analysis. Sympathy with the sufferers identifies results with what is often a too remote cause. Judgments are formed on broad lines, and they are not always just. Despite contemporary

* As an instance it was credibly reported that during the fighting on October 30th, one hundred Imperialists were cut off by a force of the revolutionaries and shepherded into a godown which was promptly set on fire. All the Imperialists, it was said, perished in the flames.

feeling, posterity in calmer and more judicial mood will, it is believed, acquit the Imperial Clan of blame.

In the meantime it may be recorded that the extent of the tragedy was not so considerable as from the above account might have been supposed. With war at their doors for several days, it was estimated that not less than two-thirds of the population had already fled. Before the end of October "the Chinese city, no longer the pride of the Yangtze, had become more like a city of the dead." Those who remained managed to flee before the fire and with few exceptions escaped. Fortunately, too, on the 2nd of November, through the energies of Dr. Booth, of Hankow, a strong body of foreigners and native Red Cross men carrying stretchers started to walk to the hospital to see how matters really stood, and if possible to get the patients into Hankow. An Imperialist guard, which marched in a straggling line in the rear, accompanied them.

"The scenes," ran the account of the expedition, "were pitiful. Desolation reigned supreme. Where once had been thriving thoroughfares, now nothing but a heap of smouldering ruins. Where once were to be seen crowds of people, now nothing but a few wretches grovelling amongst the ashes of what used to be their homes. To add to the ghastliness of the scene were the corpses of men, women and children, many of them charred to a cinder, and all of them showing signs of having been preyed upon by the pariah dogs of the neighbourhood.

"Upon turning a corner of the road a full view of the hospital flag was seen. That part of the compound at any rate was still standing. A little further on a coolie was met carrying a letter from the hospital to the Concession. According to him the buildings were all safe with the exception of one of the kitchens which had caught fire and collapsed. All along the road were to be seen squads of Imperialist soldiers, sleeping or polishing up their bayonets. No picket was on duty; they all seemed confident that they were safe from the attack of the revolutionaries. Not a revolutionary soldier was to be seen. The only signs of them were their rifles captured by the greycoats, and to these there seemed to be no end. Every soldier who was coming down from the Han was carrying one or two

rifles, some of which seemed to have escaped from a museum. But the majority were brand-new, with the vaseline on the bolt and barrel as when they left the factory.

"The hospital compound showed that the inmates had passed a sleepless night. Boxes and bedding were piled on the lawn in front of the houses. The little blind boys were also there. Their plight was pitiful indeed. All night they had stood huddled together on the patch of grass, turning their sightless eyes to the on-coming flames. One of them said: 'We could hear the fire coming ever nearer, the flames hissing and crackling when they first caught hold of the building, and then the crash of the roof and walls falling in. We could feel the heat of the flames becoming more intense every minute, until it became so fierce that we had to turn our heads away to keep our faces from being scorched. We should have liked to run away to safety, but we could not. We could not see and did not know where to run; all we could do was to stand and wait for death.'

"The removal of the wounded in the hospital itself did not take long. Willing hands soon had the stretchers rigged upon which they were carried to the Maloo, the carriage road already referred to, where a number of carriages were waiting to take them to the Concession. It was a strange expedition in a way, Imperialist soldiers acting as escorts for the rescue of their wounded enemies."

Finally about a third of the city was saved from destruction. In the early stages the Hankow Chamber of Commerce moved the Consular Body to protest against the destruction of the city, but the Consuls did not see their way to intervene. By the morning of the 3rd of November, however, conditions had changed. The point had been reached when humanitarian instinct must override the niceties of international law. A protest was entered with General Feng Kuo Chang.

The effect was immediate, resulting in the issue of a proclamation which saved a remnant, perhaps a third, of the city. But the finer part was already in ashes. The ruins of the larger buildings stood out, gaunt frameworks against the sky. Great properties had been destroyed. Thousands of homes lay desolate. Many a family had lost their all—sacrificed on the altar of liberty, paying the people's toll which is levied by war.

CHAPTER XVII

THE MANCHU RENUNCIATION

IT is now necessary to return to Peking and to go back a few days with a view to following the course of events from the flight of Sheng Hsüan Huai up to the present time.

The news of the initial and decidedly substantial victory of the Imperialists in the struggle for Hankow, the ultimate outcome of which, it will be remembered, was virtually assured on the 27th of October, was not long in being telegraphed throughout the country, and it looked for the moment, on the surface of things, as though the tide had turned and had now set in favour of the Manchu cause. There seemed also to be other ground for congratulating the Imperialists. Not only had the northern troops evidenced their military superiority beyond all question, but in Peking it was thought that a financial group had at last been found who were prepared to float a considerable loan. One of the chief difficulties hitherto had been the question of funds with which to pay the troops and carry on the machine of government. In the disorganised state of China's finances this tends at all times to be something of a problem. With the outbreak of the Revolution the supply of funds on which the government machine largely depends began to drop off, and to the dangers of the campaign of their active enemies threatened to be added those of discontent and disaffection amongst their own adherents. "Money talks" in the East as in other places, perhaps even more so, and other things being reasonably equal, the odds are greatly in favour of the steady paymaster.

In these circumstances, as has been already mentioned, an appeal was made to the Four Nations combination for a loan, but after due consideration it was thought that neither would it be expedient nor would it accord with the obligations of

their self-imposed definition of neutrality. It appeared, however, that the appeal for help had not been made in vain in other quarters, and it was freely stated that negotiations with Baron Cottu, the representative in Peking of a Franco-Belgian group, had resulted in arrangements for a loan of £6,000,000. Finally, there seemed reason for satisfaction in the moral effect throughout the country which it was believed would be derived from "the return of Achilles," in the person of Yuan Shih K'ai, who was on the eve of departure for Hankow.

But in China appearances are even more than proverbially deceptive. The surface of things is but a poor looking-glass in which to seek the reflection of the subterranean workings of life and politics. Unlike the magic mirror of Japan, it usually carries but little impress of the pattern worked beneath. While the minds of those in high places had been occupied, now with military questions, now with the conditions of Yuan Shih K'ai, now with the demands of the Tzu Cheng Yuan, now with the financial and a hundred and one other requirements of a bewilderingly complex situation, there had grown up a new danger in another quarter. At first "a little cloud, like a man's hand," it had now assumed threatening proportions.

The danger spot, as far as it appeared at this time, was at Lanchow,* the unaspiring prefectural city, hitherto unknown to fame save as the neighbourhood of the autumn manœuvres. It was a danger which to the observant had never been entirely absent, but which no one supposed would develop either with such rapidity or with such strength. Nothing, however, is surprising in times such as these, which show men as they are to mankind and to themselves—times which make or mar.

Among the troops which were ordered to Yungpingfu for the autumn manœuvres was the 20th Division from Mukden, under the command of General Chang Chao Tseng. General Chang had been educated in Japan and had strong leanings in the direction of reform. In these inclinations his troops seemed to be with him, for, as has been already recorded, when the call was sounded from manœuvres to entrain at

* Lanchow is on the Peking-Mukden railway line and the nearest station to Yungpingfu.

Lanchow for actual warfare at Hankow, the 20th Division made all sorts of difficulty until eventually General Chang took charge at Lanchow, and proceeded to launch a series of memorials embodying demands for Constitutional Government and other reforms.

These demands, however, were but the manifestation of a plan secretly concerted to encompass the Manchu abdication, or at least to compel their complete surrender to the nation's will. The leading spirit was General Wu Lu Chen, commander of the 6th Division at Paotingfu, a young man of the greatest promise. In the plot with him and General Chang was a third officer, General Lan Tien Wei, who held the command at Mukden. The three men were old friends, the education of each had been along the same lines, and in the present situation they imagined they saw the hand of destiny pointing out the path which was to lead them to effect their country's freedom.

Their plan was to march on Peking while the main Imperial forces were engaged at Hankow, and their demands were now made more for the sake of regularising their position and providing themselves with a justification for action in the event of redress being refused, rather than in any belief that they would be complied with.

Ignored at first and later on approached privately, General Chang treated the envoys from the Capital with scant courtesy, persisting in the demands of himself and his friends, which were finally embodied in a menacing memorial telegraphed to Peking from Lanchow on the 29th of October. It is to be feared that the receipt of this document sadly marred the joy in Palace circles which the recent Hankow victory had inspired. Added to the persistence of the Tzu Cheng Yuan, with whom it was more than suspected General Chang, who alone was known with certainty in the matter, was in close touch, this demand for concessions could not be ignored. Had there been any doubt on this point it must have been speedily dispelled by reflection on two further elements in the situation. In the first place, General Chiang Kuei Ti was in Peking in command of some 8,000 troops. These were old style soldiers under order for disbandment at the end of 1911 in accordance with the scheme for the formation of the Model Army.

These troops had mostly been through the Boxer troubles under General Ma at Tientsin. They had tasted blood and the exhilarating glories of loot, and they could not be depended upon to meet a determined attack, when by joining the attackers an opportunity would be offered of indulging in an agreeable pastime.*

Secondly, the greatest apprehension was felt, and indeed it has also been authoritatively stated since, that Yuan Shih K'ai was aware of the contemplated action and approved it, which no doubt in part explains the confidence with which he had offered an immediate constitution to the revolutionaries at Wuchang.

In these things, however, there is perhaps nothing very surprising. The most interesting feature of the demonstration is that it was entirely independent of the revolutionary central organisation. To the leaders, indeed, it must have come as an agreeable surprise to learn that, despite the victory of the Imperialist arms at Hankow, another combination had arisen at their gates and had added its weight to the scale on the revolutionary side.

Such briefly were the forces that made for the issue on the 30th of October of the now famous Decree of the Manchu Renunciation, the great act of atonement which was designed to placate the Nation. The following were the terms of this pathetic utterance:—

"It is now three years since with much trepidation and misgiving We took up the arduous task of government, and it has ever been our object to promote the best interests of all classes of Our subjects. But We have employed incompetent Ministers and have in Our conduct of affairs of state displayed all too little statesmanship. We have filled the executive departments with princes of the blood, thus offending the canons of Constitutional Government; in railway matters We have allowed Ourself to be blinded and have acted contrary to the wishes of the country; when We hurried on measures of reform, the officials and gentry used them for their own ends; when We changed old institutions, the powerful turned the occasion to their own profit. Much of the people's wealth has already been taken, and not a single measure beneficial to the people

* At a later period General Chiang's troops were found on the side of law and order, but the line they would take up at this time was by no means clearly indicated. The writer has indeed been assured on reliable authority that the two Generals were in communication with a view to co-operation. How little reliance could be placed on them has recently (August, 1912) been demonstrated by their mutiny at Tungchow.



General Chiang Kuei Ti, General Officer commanding old style Troops in the Province of Chihli.

given in return. Edicts dealing with the reform of the judiciary have been issued time and again, but not a person has obeyed them. By degrees it has come to this, that when the people were seething with discontent, We knew it not; when danger was imminent, We were kept in ignorance. As a result, a rising broke out in Szechuen, closely followed by one in Hupei, while now Shensi and Hunan are disturbed, and grave news comes from Kuangtung and Kiangsi. In short, the whole Empire is in a ferment and men's minds on fire, the spirits of past Emperors are disturbed, and the people all reduced to utter misery. The fault lies solely with Us, and We hereby declare to all the world that We swear an oath with Our subjects to bring about a general reform for the establishment of a full Constitution. On all the good and bad points in the laws, on all the changes to be made, We will consult public opinion, and all in the old system that is inconsistent with the Constitution shall be abolished.

"As regards putting an end to the distinction between Manchus and Chinese, the several Edicts issued by the late Emperor must be put into immediate execution. The rising in Hupei and Hunan, though troops are involved, is due actually to the mismanagement of Jui Ch'eng and others, who forced the people into rebellion and the troops to mutiny, and is no meaningless revolt. We take on Ourself the blame for having appointed Jui Ch'eng to this post, and We hold the troops and people blameless, so let them but return to their allegiance and past offences shall be forgiven.

"We are but a weak body to be set above all you Ministers and people, and the result is the outbreak of such a revolt as will destroy all the good performed by Our ancestors. We are grieved at Our failure and filled with remorse, and We rely entirely on the support of Our people and troops to restore prosperity to the millions of Our subjects and to strengthen the foundations of Our throne. That peace may succeed disorder and peril yield to safety depends entirely on the loyalty of Our people, on whom We rely implicitly. At the present time the financial and foreign situations are both desperate, and even if Prince and people work in harmony the condition of the country may still be critical. But if the people disregard the national safety and allow themselves to be led away by counsels of revolt, some overwhelming calamity will befall them, and then will China's future be dark indeed. Therefore is Our mind filled with anxiety and apprehension day and night. We earnestly hope that all Our people will understand Our meaning.

"Let this be known to all."

In the varied history of the house founded by Nurhachi there have been many strange and unexpected things. But there has never been anything either so strange or so utterly unexpected by the outside world as the terms of the document in which the guardians of the unconscious Son of Heaven caused him to expiate the sins of omission and commission of the last few years of Manchu rule. In the circumstances it was, of course, inevitable and only right

that great concessions should be made, but the fitness of things decrees a limit to self-abasement. Once more the trembling voices behind the Throne had spoken too plainly of their fear, and the sympathy which a dignified recognition of the just demands of the people would have ensured was swallowed up by the feelings aroused by the contemptible course pursued. From a princely house men expect at least dignity in misfortune and courage to meet Fate's stern decrees. The surviving instinct of a once fighting stock and conquering race presupposed a just pride and a due respect for inherited traditions. But it seemed as though with the Imperial Clan and their near advisers, or at least with the majority of them, these things had ceased to be. Three weeks of weakness and panic had been crowned by a supreme act of humiliation and despair. Sympathisers weakened in their allegiance, enemies hailed their downfall as assured, and even members of the Eight Banners themselves were filled with shame.

In China, as it has been already observed, appearances count for much. It would not be a serious exaggeration to say they are one of life's most important elements. Curious as it may sound, even in times of crisis the question of dignity is uppermost in men's minds. The prevalence of such a sentiment only emphasised the degradation of the Imperial House. "How after this," was the characteristic question of a Manchu prince to a foreign friend, "can we descend from the stage?"

Simultaneously with this Decree was issued a series of complementary Edicts, one of which couched in the following terms recognised the sacred right of freedom of thought and granted an amnesty to political offenders *:—

"The Senate has presented a Memorial praying for the speedy removal of the ban on political offenders, so as to exercise clemency and win the hearts of the people. From earliest times a ban on political offenders has been regarded as an evil to be avoided, for not only does it smother talent and crush a manly spirit, but political theories change from day to day, and utterances which were regarded as criminal in other times may become the accepted views of to-day. If while drooping in exile abroad such offenders may have uttered incendiary speeches,

* A later Decree sanctioned the formation of political parties, *vide post*, p. 175.

this is but a negligible fault, born of their political ardour, which caused them to overstep the bounds. Their feelings therefore are pardonable.

"We hereby issue a special proclamation making known Our gracious desire to make a new beginning with Our people. All political offenders since 1898, all men who on account of revolution against the Government have gone into exile in order to avoid punishment, and all those who, involved in the present disturbances against their will, voluntarily return to their allegiance, will be forgiven for their past offences and be regarded as loyal subjects. In future all subjects of the Chinese Empire who do not actually transgress the law will be entitled to the protection of the Government, and no person shall be arrested on suspicion and without due process of law. All those to whom this amnesty will apply should endeavour to improve their ways and manifest their loyalty, eagerly awaiting the completion of the Constitution. Thus does the Throne declare its earnest desire for reform."

Another Decree excluded Princes of the Blood from the Cabinet :—

"The Senate has presented a Memorial to the effect that the Cabinet should be actually a responsible body, and that members of the Imperial Family should not be appointed Ministers of State. The appointment of members of the Imperial Family to discharge administrative functions is at variance with the practice of constitutional countries. By the established laws of Our Dynasty Princes of the Blood are not allowed to interfere with affairs of state, a principle which is expressly laid down in the rescripts of Our ancestors, and which fulfils all the requirements of a Constitutional State.

"From the time of T'ung Chih the country has been whelmed in a sea of trouble, and it was then first that a Prince Regent was appointed to share the burden of government, a practice which has been continued down to the present day. With the formation of a Cabinet this year Princes and other nobles were appointed Ministers of State, but this has only been a temporary expedient, and is not the avowed policy of the Throne. The Senate's Memorial states that a Cabinet composed of members of the Imperial Clan is absolutely irreconcilable with a Constitutional regime, and requests that the provisional regulations* of the Cabinet be annulled, that a Cabinet with proper powers be formed, and that Princes of the Blood be not appointed Ministers of State. This has for its object the showing of due respect to the Imperial House and the consolidation of the foundations of the State, and as such We fully agree with its terms. As soon as matters have become somewhat quieter We will select able and deserving men to form a responsible Cabinet. Princes of the Blood shall not again be appointed Ministers of State, and the provisional regulations of the Cabinet shall be abolished, so as to conform with Constitutional principles and strengthen the State."

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* These were the regulations promulgated earlier in the year, when a Cabinet was formed in fulfilment of the promise to the Tzu Cheng Yuan. *Vide ante*, pp. 46 and 86.

Finally, a fourth Decree ordered the draft of the proposed Constitution to be handed over to the Tzu Cheng Yuan for its consideration :—

"The Senate has presented a Memorial requesting the promulgation of an Edict ordering that the Constitutional laws of the Empire be handed over to the Senate for its deliberation.

"Successive Emperors of Our Dynasty have ruled the country with humanity and benevolence for some three hundred years. The late Empress Dowager and the late Emperor, seeing the difficulties of the times, took a drastic measure of reform, and issued a number of Edicts, determining the formation of a Constitutional Monarchy, and promulgating a programme of Constitutional preparation, which laid down the progress to be made year by year.

"We were but a child when We took up the reins of government, and it is with the utmost trepidation that We strive to follow in the footsteps of our glorious forbears.

"In the tenth moon of last year the Senate presented a Memorial requesting the speedy opening of Parliament, and We issued an Edict, naming the fifth year of Hsuan T'ung (1913) as the time for the assembling of Parliament, and especially appointed P'u Lun and others to draft a Constitution with all speed and await Our approval. The Senate states that the Constitutional laws are for the purpose of bringing about a more perfect harmony and understanding between the Throne and the people, and that they ought to be laid before the Ministers and people for discussion as soon as they are drawn up. Also that deliberation by the Senate on these laws after their first draft and before their promulgation would be in no way at variance with the declared wishes of the late Emperors.

"We hereby order P'u Lun and others in accordance with the general scheme of the Constitutional laws as already sanctioned, to hand over the draft of the Constitution, as soon as it is completed, to the Senate for careful deliberation. On obtaining Our sanction it will be promulgated in order to give confidence to the people and meet their wishes for reform."

These documents speak for themselves with more than sufficient eloquence. The Manchu surrender, on paper at any rate, was complete. The three Generals, who had certainly never expected that their demands would be complied with, had been out-played, and their designs frustrated. There was nothing left for them to do but to make their acknowledgments. Accordingly in a characteristically picturesque memorial, the principal object of which it must be admitted was to press home the advantages that had been gained, through their mouthpiece, General Chang,

they thus described the depth of appreciation of the army :—

"Upon the receipt of the Decree showing that the Throne is sincere in actually establishing a Constitutional regime and in carrying out reforms with the nation, the troops of the Army shed tears of gratitude."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE CONSTITUTION

FROM this point events in Peking marched rapidly. The fatal plunge had been taken, and it would not have been politic, even if it had been possible, to delay giving practical effect to the principles which had been laid down. To all outward seeming the knell of autocracy had been tolled. The picturesque political institutions of an immemorial antiquity, so long threatened, were now suddenly swept away. Never more, it might be presumed, would the lives of men be sacrificed to the whim of the masters of Palace intrigue. The Vermilion Pencil would not, perhaps, be condemned to idleness, but the Edicts which it would write would henceforth be only expressive of the will of a theoretically responsible Ministry. In the new order of things the Throne would be but the picturesque emblem of authority, the Son of Heaven the harmless conduit-pipe for the communication of the State's Decrees. No longer would the last word lie with a sacrosanct personage whose life was spent in the enervating seclusion of an Oriental palace and whose mind was illuminated only by such knowledge of outside things as could infiltrate through the walls of the Forbidden City.

The first step along the new path was taken on the 1st of November, two days after the issue of the epoch-making pronouncements which were recorded in the last chapter. In terms that preserved the amenities incidental to such a matter the present incumbents were retired from office and Yuan Shih K'ai was appointed Premier with instructions to form the first Cabinet under the new regime.

"Prince Ch'ing and others," * ran the Decree, "have memorialised Us stating that they have failed in the discharge of their duties and praying for their immediate dismissals.

"Tsai Tse and others † have memorialised Us stating that matters of State are of extreme importance and praying that capable men may be appointed in their place in accordance with Constitutional principles and for the better governing of the country.

"Tsou Chia Lai and others ‡ have memorialised Us stating that in the present time of crisis matters of government are of extreme importance and praying that they may be allowed to resign in the interests of the State and of the public tranquillity.

"These memorials are most proper, let the requests be granted; let Prince Ch'ing vacate the office of Premier, let the Grand Secretaries, Na Tung and Hsü Shih Chang, vacate their offices of Associate Premiers, let Duke Tsai Tse and others and Tsou Chia Lai and others vacate their offices as Ministers of State.

"Yuan Shih K'ai is hereby appointed Premier; as he has already left for Hupei to take command there, let him perform the outlines of his task and then proceed forthwith to Peking to form a complete Cabinet and devise speedy measures for the reform of the Government. During the few days that must elapse before Yuan Shih K'ai's return, let Prince Ch'ing and others perform their duties as before, and pending the completion of the Cabinet let Tsai Tse and others and Tsou Chia Lai and others continue to function as hitherto and let none seek to evade his responsibility."

At the same time a further Decree appointed Wei Kuang Tao Viceroy of Hukuang in the stead of Yuan Shih K'ai, who necessarily vacated the position on becoming Premier, while yet another Decree, designed doubtless to prevent any misapprehension on Yuan's part as to the intentions of the Court towards himself, expressly retained, vested in him, the control of all naval and military forces in Hupei and of all naval forces on the Yangtze.

Next day, November 2nd, saw a further Edict in reply to the indefatigable Chang Chao Tseng, reiterating the instructions to the Tzu Cheng Yuan to draft the Constitution. "As for the Constitution of China," ran the chief passage, "let it be for the Senate to submit at once a draft for Our consideration, in order to make clear the common interest which unites Throne and People, and that we seek the good of all and not Our own."

* Na Tung and Hsü Shih Chang, the associate Premiers.

† The other Princes of the Blood with Cabinet rank.

‡ The rest of the Cabinet.

With the whole House standing and in sonorous tones that were expressive alike of the greatness of the occasion and the dignified diction of the Imperial utterance, this Decree was forthwith read to the members of the Tzu Cheng Yuan by their President. Amid thunderous applause it was moved, seconded, and carried that the important principles of the Constitution be drawn up, submitted to the Throne for approval, communicated to all the Provincial Assemblies for consideration, and in due course elaborated in their final form. The House then adjourned, meeting again in the afternoon, when a draft of the fundamental principles of the Constitution, which in their essentials had been previously prepared, was read and after a few modifications unanimously adopted. The matter of the Memorial which was to introduce them to the notice of the Throne secured equally rapid approval. The complete document was couched in the following terms:—

"Your servants would humbly venture to point out that the revolutionary movement has spread in every direction, having gradually extended to Szechuen, Kuangtung, Hunan, Kiangsi, Shensi, Shansi, and Hupei. The Empire is tottering already and conditions become daily worse. The one means to save the situation, the one remedy for the national ills, may be summed up in the words 'Look to it that the Constitution is sound.'

"Edicts have just been issued promising reform to the people, while the points put forward by General Chang Chao Tseng and his fellow officers have all been conceded by the Throne, so now the whole Empire knows that it is the Emperor's fixed determination to set up such an excellent Constitutional Monarchy as shall satisfy the universal longing for good government. Now we are gratified beyond measure by the receipt of another Edict ordering that the drafting of the Constitution be left to the Senate, and we cannot but try with all sincerity to put into effect the Imperial will.

"In every nation which has a Constitutional Monarchy, the British Constitution has been taken as the model, and in the present instance in drafting our Constitution we cannot do better than follow its principles. But the task of alteration and arrangement of the text is enormous and will take a considerable time to complete. If the people surmise as to the forces influencing the Throne, they may perhaps suspect that the Ministers round the Emperor are whispering in his ear that once the danger past he can go back on his words. Just so did Napoleon III. of France prove unfaithful after the danger was over. But if a short scheme of the Constitution be first of all proclaimed to the people, then the whole nation will rejoice, saying, 'Our Emperor is indeed listening to his people's prayer, meeting us with all fairness and sincerity.' This

report will spread abroad and will do more good than a million soldiers. We have now respectfully prepared a preliminary draft of nineteen important Articles of Constitution, which are all recognised by the Constitutions of all constitutional countries, and we present them in the present abbreviated condition. As soon as the full draft is prepared it will be again discussed.

"These Articles having been repeatedly deliberated by the Senate, which has voted in their favour, we hereby respectfully present a list of them for the Throne's perusal, requesting that the Throne may give its decision, accept the Articles boldly, take the Oath in the Imperial Ancestral Temple, and proclaim the Articles to the people so as to strengthen the State and defend the Imperial House. We do not deliberately use such terrifying language, but any delay will be too late. If the Throne does not proclaim the Constitution at once, we fear the Imperial favour will never reach the people, and the Revolution will reach unspeakable lengths. Moved by our devoted loyalty as well as by the sight of the present troubles, we cannot refrain from speaking thus plainly to the Emperor's face, and we await the Throne's commands with fear and trembling.

"The Constitutional laws are an unchangeable ordinance, which it is of the utmost importance that both ruler and people should observe. This Senate received the Imperial commands to draft the Constitution with great misgiving, and we dare not act without taking the opinion of the whole nation, so as to secure the best results. We have therefore telegraphed to the various Provincial Assemblies to collect their views, and we propose that in all matters of importance at present the troops be allowed temporarily to give their opinion in order to satisfy the wishes of the people.

"THE NINETEEN ARTICLES OF CONSTITUTION.

"I. The Imperial line of the Chinese Empire can continue perpetually unchanged.

"II. The person of the Emperor is sacred and inviolable.

"III. The powers of the Emperor shall be limited by the Constitution.

"IV. Succession to the Throne shall be determined by the Constitution.

"V. The Constitution shall be drafted and passed by the Senate and promulgated by the Throne.

"VI. Amendments in the Constitution shall be originated by the National Parliament.

"VII. The members of the Upper House shall be elected by the people,* the electorate being limited to those who have certain qualifications required by law.

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* The basic idea of the Constitution being English, two Chambers were involved. In the circumstances of the Chinese polity, however, both would have to be elective. Article VII. is not intended to convey the idea that the Lower House would not be elective.

"VIII. The Prime Minister shall be elected by the National Parliament and his appointment ratified by the Emperor. Ministers of State shall be recommended by the Prime Minister and appointed by the Emperor; no members of the Imperial House shall act as Prime Minister, Minister of State, or High Officer in the Provinces.

"IX. If the Prime Minister is denounced by the National Parliament, either the latter shall dissolve or the former resign, but there shall be no dissolution of two successive Parliaments during the same Cabinet.

"X. The Emperor shall be the Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy, but no military or naval force shall be employed within the Empire except in accordance with the rules expressly provided therefor by the National Parliament.

"XI. No ordinance shall set aside the laws on anything settled by law, except in the case of an emergency ordinance, for which special rules shall be drafted.

"XII. No treaty shall be concluded without the approval of the National Parliament, but in case of a declaration of war or of the conclusion of peace when Parliament is not in session, approval may be given at a subsequent session.

"XIII. The official system and the rules governing it shall be decided by law.

"XIV. In case the budget of any year is not passed by the National Parliament, that of the preceding year shall not hold good for that year. There shall be no fixed annual expenditure, and there shall be no extraordinary excess of expenditure beyond the budget.

"XV. The amount of the expenditure for the Imperial Household, and any increase or decrease therein, shall be voted by the National Parliament.

"XVI. No ceremony of the Imperial House shall be contrary to the Constitution.

"XVII. Administrative courts shall be established by both Houses of Parliament.

"XVIII. All Acts passed by the National Parliament shall be promulgated by the Emperor.

"XIX. For the purposes of Articles 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 18 the Senate shall be deemed to occupy the position of the Parliament until the latter shall have been convoked."

Such were the principles which, it was hoped amongst men of moderate opinions, would form the Magna Carta of Chinese Liberties. They put an end in no uncertain way to the absolutism of the Throne. They secured the control of the National Parliament. They vested the sovereignty in the people. Finally, the conditions of the new order were so clearly expressed as to render impossible those evasive and partial measures which had characterised the Manchu fulfilment of former promises.

The Imperial consent was proclaimed on the following day :—

"The Senate has presented a Memorial reporting that it has decided on the principles of a monarchical Constitution, which it proposes in the first place to embody in a former protocol of Nineteen Articles for Our perusal, and it prays that We will take an Oath in the temple of Our Ancestors, and will proclaim these Articles to all Our subjects in order to strengthen the State and protect the Imperial House.

"We have examined these Articles with great care, and find that they are all of the utmost importance. We therefore command that they be sanctioned, that a day be appointed for Us to take the Oath in the temple of Our Ancestors, and that this most important protocol be at once promulgated, printed on yellow paper and proclaimed to all Our subjects. When later on the Senate drafts the Constitution, this shall be taken as its basis."

Thus ended the long Constitutional struggle between the Throne and the People, and the People had secured all if not more than they had formerly demanded. The question was, however, whether the Imperial surrender had not come too late. Had the Regent and the widow of Kuang Hsü sunk their differences and seized their opportunities any time these two years past, all might still have been well. Had they voluntarily conceded what was now wrung from them they might conceivably have lived to see their House again grow great. But now opportunity had been given for the growth of the forces of Republicanism, and it was more than a question whether those who controlled public opinion in the country would be satisfied.

How acute were the anxieties of the Manchus may be gathered from the terms of the following despairing appeal :—

"In the administration of the Empire We have striven actively on behalf of Our people and daily do We show diligence to improve their condition. Still it appears that Our efforts fall short.

"Recently, owing to the rebellion in Szechuen, and Hupei, We issued Edicts laying the blame on Ourselves, hastening the introduction of Constitutional Government, organising a fresh Cabinet and pardoning political offenders. Yesterday again, in compliance with the request of the Senate, the important document containing the Nineteen Articles of the proposed Constitution was sanctioned to be sworn to before the Ancestral Tablets and promulgated to the whole Empire, in the hope that the interests of the people would be advanced and by way of manifesting the impartiality of the Throne towards all. Thenceforth

We shall not fail to consider the feeling of the nation and to adopt suggestions put forward in any matters affecting the administration of the country with regard to which representations are made from the people. Heaven created the world and established sovereigns, and the views of the people are in fact the views of Heaven. There are those who on account of the lack of progress in the administration of the government are eager for reform. When their methods are violent they are termed by foreign States anarchists. All European and Western countries which have advanced from absolutism to constitutionalism, have all perforce gone through these stages. At the present time rebellion is daily increasing in the various provinces, the aim generally being to bring Constitutional Government into operation. All are striving to do right, and they have really been roused up to their present state. The case is not the same as that of the rebels in former dynasties, whose ambitions were of a dastardly character.

"Formerly the rebels massacred the population because there existed no bond between superiors and inferiors, the latter of whom, being unable to communicate with the Throne, could not obtain a hearing. We were then constrained to have recourse to troops to succour their misery, and We had pardoned those who had returned to the right path by Edicts abounding in leniency and kindness.

"At present We have again read the Memorials of the Senate and of General Chang Chao Tseng, and We are persuaded that the troubles are due to a political cause. We are worried both day and night and We are indeed plunged into a deplorable situation. If We do not change Our ideas it will be impossible to predict to what point these misfortunes will still pursue Us. Our pain and grief is acute, and it is impossible to endure it for a single moment longer.

"We have just now received a telegraphic Memorial from Yuan Shih K'ai, stating that on October 30 he had received the four grievous Edicts from the Throne, and that he had accordingly ordered the troops to suspend hostilities. Further, that he had put out proclamations inviting submission and that he had transmitted to Wuchang the desire of the Throne to see the revolutionaries disperse.

"Yuan Shih K'ai has indeed acted well in conformity with Our intentions, and we direct him still once more to publish the Edict of November 2 on the subject of the projected Constitution and that of November 3 on the subject of the Nineteen Articles of the Constitution which have been promulgated. We still fear that some may not hear of these Edicts on account of the great distances, and We therefore earnestly repeat them a second time. In the provinces which have revolted all military commanders should respond to Our desire by publishing with zeal these Edicts and by doing their best to pacify the revolutionaries, so that everyone may know that the Throne has a strong desire to ameliorate the condition of the people. We cannot bear again to have recourse to armed force. We have all one and the same heart, and this heart contains one sole reasoning. We hope that matters will end by a peaceful understanding as inevitably as the ice melts and the water flows.

"As for those who are against the dynasty, there are such people, but they are in the minority. We all belong to the same Chinese Empire, and there are no distinctions to set between us. Among the more ancient Emperors, Hsun (who came from the West) and Yu (who came from the East) have equally been great Chinese sovereigns. Who then would be so heartless as to wish that the people should go on killing each other to the end of time?

"To sum up, the State is in an extremely difficult situation. It pertains to Our troops and people to repair the misfortune in rendering aid one to another, so that Our four hundred millions of subjects—descended from such excellent tribes—may be on a footing of equality with the rest of the world.

"Those who cling to their position and have lost their common sense, and who let their fury loose relying on their numbers, fearful neither of danger nor of death, will not be tolerated by humanity. Their conduct will be disapproved of by all the countries of the world in the event of their striving to accomplish their aim. For the happiness of Our people and for the peace of the world, not only can we not tolerate the existence of this class of people, but Our troops and people who love their country should also consider them as enemies. It is quite impossible to allow these barbarous people to indulge in massacres and to compromise the tranquillity of China.

"We hope that Our troops and Our people will give proof of their fidelity and devotion, in order that We may advance to a new political regime and enjoy peace fraternally in full equality."

CHAPTER XIX

THE PREMIER IN PEKING

IT will be recalled that the Edict of November 1st commanded Yuan Shih K'ai to adjust affairs in Hupei and come with all haste to Peking. Such was the urgency of the Throne, however, that a second Edict was issued on the following day, November 2nd, reiterating this command and instructing Wang Shih Chen to act as Viceroy of Hukuang, pending the arrival of Wei Kuang Tao, who it will also be remembered had been appointed Yuan's successor.

It was not destined, however, that matters should move quite so fast. It appeared that Yuan Shih K'ai was by no means anxious to return to Peking. Apart from the fact that he may not have felt as yet in a sufficiently strong position to justify his risking himself in the capital, he probably thought that he could be of more use to his country in the proximity of the revolutionary leaders. There was still a hope that he might influence them towards peaceful measures. Moreover, he would be in a better position at Hankow to form an estimate of the forces that were immediately arrayed against the Imperialist cause. Finally, in view of the fact that the new Constitution was on the eve of being promulgated, he doubtless required something more than an Imperial Edict before taking up the important office of Premier. At best it was not an enviable position at the present time, and one not to be assumed except under substantial pressure and with a strong measure of support from the popular side, as far as it was represented by the Tzu Cheng Yuan.

In these circumstances His Excellency addressed the Throne in a characteristic Memorial in which he pleaded

unfitness for the post. The Throne, however, had gone too far, and the fortunes of the dynasty had been too strongly staked on Yuan Shih K'ai to admit of the acceptance of any refusal.

"Yuan Shih K'ai," ran the Edict in reply, "has presented the following telegraphic Memorial:—

"'The duties of Prime Minister are onerous in the highest degree, and I fear that I am incapable of performing them. I request, therefore, that the Edict appointing me to the post be withdrawn.'

"The times are out of joint and the minds of the people are grievously disturbed. It is impossible to cut to the root of the trouble and consolidate the foundations of the State without serious reform of the administration, and so, obedient to the prayers of Our people, We have reorganised the Cabinet in order to realise the reforms promised to the people.

"The aforesaid officer, thanks to his long services in the capital and the provinces, enjoys the confidence and esteem of all. He has, moreover, ever been the recipient of many favours from the Throne, and has given proof of his deep attachment and loyalty. He is, therefore, in a position to forward considerably the great scheme We have undertaken, and it is for this reason that We appointed him Prime Minister. He should bear in mind the confidence reposed in him during the previous reign and take into consideration the grave dangers with which the country is faced.

"Let him address himself to surmount the difficulties opposing him without further excuses, and come to Peking with all speed and take up his duties."

On November 5th two further Edicts were issued in response to Memorials by the Tzu Cheng Yuan. The first Edict of October 30th had been in the nature of the pronouncement of great principles. Further details had to be settled in the matter of the opening of Parliament, while the position of those who had brought about revolution had to be clearly defined before the hope could be reasonably entertained that they would be placated.

On the former point it was ordered that "the regulations governing the Parliament and the election of members be drafted and determined. As soon as the members have been elected the Parliament shall be at once convoked." As to the latter point: "The Tzu Cheng Yuan has presented a Memorial requesting that the recent revolutionaries be recognised as political parties in accordance with the law and be granted official appoint-

ments. Some time ago when the said Yuan requested that an amnesty be extended to the revolutionaries, We already decreed that the prayer be sanctioned. We hereby order that the recent revolutionaries be recognised as political parties, so that men of talents may be trained and employed by the Government."

At the same time, as it seemed desirable to leave no stone unturned to convince the people of all classes, especially the military, of the sincerity and extent of the Throne's promises, it was decided to appoint an Imperial Commissioner to proceed to the Yangtze provinces and endeavour to induce in those disaffected regions a return to loyalty. And who was so suited to the task as General Chang Chao Tseng, the Dictator of Lanchow?—a reformer, yet not a Republican; a man apparently of enlightenment, yet not extreme, of courage, influence and determination; a man whose services, it might be supposed, would entitle him to a respectful hearing.

Once more appearances indicated the obvious, hence the following Edict:—

"The object of the present revolt in the provinces is to effect a change in the system of government. We have already issued numerous Edicts declaring most clearly Our wish to promote reforms favourable to the people, but now the revolutionary movement is so widespread that we fear these Edicts may not come to the notice of all our troops and people in the different provinces.

"Lieutenant-General Chang Chao Tseng, of the 20th Division, is a man of high reputation in military circles, besides being deeply interested in political matters and an ardent reformer. We command that he be granted the brevet of Vice-President of a Board with the title of 'Pacificator,' and that he proceed with all speed to the Yangtze and proclaim throughout the neighbouring districts the gracious intentions of the Throne. He shall devote himself with sincerity and singleness of purpose to the task of soothing the people, making clearly understood of the whole nation the determination of the Government not to use troops to put down these disturbances. The said Commissioner shall further appoint suitable officers to proceed to the various provinces where there is disorder and exhort and reason with the people. If the disturbances are quelled in this way, he shall present memorials requesting that such officers be liberally rewarded, as an encouragement."

But once more the obvious was dictated by considerations which to the uninitiated were somewhat obscure. For three

weeks the combination which had resulted in the Lanchow Memorials had been a serious menace to the occupants of the Forbidden City. Though the three Generals had obtained their demands, it was by no means certain that they rested satisfied with their achievement. On the contrary, it was understood that Generals Wu Lu Chen and and Lan Tien Wei, who it was now known had been acting in co-operation with General Chang, were staunch republicans, while the latter was suspected of cherishing political ambitions as an independent party leader. The political horizon, it must be remembered, had been indefinitely extended. The suddenness of the break-away from old traditions had engendered a feeling of freedom which was not necessarily accompanied by a sense of responsibility or a just appreciation of ultimate consequences. An idea could grow in a night and represent a scheme, crude and ill-considered, perhaps, but fraught with dangerous possibilities by the morning.

In these circumstances the Court party had been doing what they could to break up the cabal which threatened them at such close range. As regards General Lan Tien Wei, he had been for the moment ignored, being further away at Mukden and for various reasons a lesser danger than either of the others. General Wu Lu Chen had just been made Governor of Taiyuanfu. This place, the capital city of the Province of Shansi, had fallen to the revolutionaries on the 29th of October, and the Governor, together with his wife, two sons and a grandson, murdered,* meeting their fate on the self-same spot where the ruthless Viceroy Yü Hsien had perpetrated the brutal massacre of scores of defenceless missionaries, men and women with

* Taiyuanfu fell as a result of a revolt of the soldiers, amongst whom sedition was rife, and who objected to being ordered to Hsianfu to quell the outbreak there. Suspected, they had hitherto been kept without ammunition. But this was now served out for the purposes of the expedition, and the rising forthwith followed. Subsequently the revolutionaries controlled the branch railway to Taiyuanfu, and for some considerable time menaced the line of communication between Peking and Hankow. In fact, however, communication was only once interrupted for some thirty-six hours early in November, the dispositions of the loyal troops at the junction of Shihchiachuang proving adequate to the requirements of the situation.

their little children, in 1900. A vacant position was thus created which could be held by General Wu with greater safety from the Imperial point of view than the command of a division of troops on the railway line between Peking and Hankow. Finally, it was now intended to separate General Chang from his troops also, hence his pacificatory mission to the Yangtze Valley.

It has already been recorded that the master-mind amongst these three Generals was Wu Lu Chen, a man of whom foreigners, who had enjoyed opportunities of knowing him, had formed the highest expectations. It may now be taken as clearly established that despite General Wu's appointment to Taiyuanfu the plot had gone further than had been supposed. General Wu was of the number of those who believed that a Limited Monarchy under the Manchus offered no hope of a satisfactory solution, and it is probable that but for the miscarriage of a telegram from himself to General Chang, his plans would have matured several days earlier in the form of an advance on Peking in the interests of the Republican cause. Owing to this failure in their communications, however, their position at the moment was one of enforced inactivity.

The appointment of General Chang as "Pacificator" must, in any case, have brought matters to a head as far as the plans of the three Generals were concerned. But by a curious coincidence the plot had been discovered by loyal Imperialist officers at Paotingfu, and betrayed to Peking on the day before, namely, the 5th of October. The immediate consequence was the murder of General Wu Lu Chen at Shih Chia Chuang, the point where the railway to Taiyuanfu joins the Peking-Hankow trunk, during the night of the 6th of October at Manchu instigation. General Lan Tien Wei the Court party could not touch. He was sufficiently strongly situated to protect himself at Mukden, and indeed he survived to play a prominent part in subsequent events. Similarly General Chang, with 9,000 troops at his back and in a position of some strategic strength at Lanchow, could be in no immediate fear for his own safety. He might either have made a demonstration or have waited calmly where he was pending developments; or, having been appointed "Pacificator," he might, under

cover of his appointment, have got away safely to the South.

In the event, however, General Chang did none of these things. For a day or two the rumour of a march on Peking, which had already got abroad, was if anything more persistent. But it came to nothing. At this moment of crisis the General's nerve entirely failed him. The tragic fate of his friend and comrade had deeply shocked him. The manner of the betrayal made him wonder whether he too might not have enemies on his own staff. It was a time when men could not be quite sure even of their own friends.

Three days later saw the inglorious end of what had promised to be a not inglorious career. Under the plea of ill-health General Chang Chao Tseng prayed the Throne to relieve him of the duties of High Peace Commissioner. By a Decree issued on the 9th of November his prayer was granted, and the erstwhile famous Dictator of Lanchow hastened to Tientsin as fast as train could carry him, there to disappear from the arena in which he had been so prominent a figure, into the safe haven of the foreign Concessions.

While the final acts of the Lanchow drama were being thus played out, events had not been at a standstill in Peking, and on the 8th an important session of the Tzu Cheng Yuan took place, which resulted in the election of Yuan Shih K'ai as Premier under Article VIII. of the fundamental principles of the Constitution. The election was made by an overwhelming majority, there being in fact scarcely half a dozen dissentients. Yuan might therefore now fairly consider that he enjoyed in large measure the support of the country. Without being a popular assembly, in the full sense, at the time of their election the members had certainly represented a substantial section of what passed for Public Opinion, while the institution itself promised at the moment to be the medium, in the form of a temporary Parliament, through which the new Constitution would be brought into being.*

The election was confirmed in due form by Imperial

* As it happened, a short time after this, the Tzu Cheng Yuan commenced steadily to decline in authority and influence, and we shall hear little or nothing more of the body which had agitated so strenuously

Edict issued on the 9th, and it was stated that his Excellency would now start for Peking forthwith. Some days, however, were to elapse before he arrived. In the meantime it was a period of grave anxiety in the capital. A great exodus of the inhabitants had commenced and was still continuing. The wildest rumours were in circulation as to the Manchu intentions of embarking on a course of reprisals.

On the 10th another Edict was published to assure the people of the genuineness of the Throne's intentions to accord equal treatment to Chinese and Manchus, and urging them to disregard those pernicious rumours which were only disseminated to promote discord and inculcate racial antagonism.

A further Edict on the 13th reiterated the assurances of the Throne to effect the political regeneration of the State in conjunction with the people. In the evening of the same day Yuan Shih K'ai arrived at Peking.

The following was the terse and effective announcement of a stirring incident that marked a new stage in the course of events which appeared in the columns of the *Peking Daily News*:—

"His Excellency Yuan Shih K'ai, China's first Constitutional Premier, arrived yesterday afternoon at Peking at about six o'clock. A number of distinguished officials met him at the station, and he immediately started for his residence inside the Tunghuamen. His Excellency wore the Yellow Jacket and appeared to be in excellent health. He walked

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during two sessions in the cause of Constitutional Reform. It was the sense of opportunism gaining the upper hand amongst the members. In times of bewilderingly rapid change men prefer not to declare themselves. Especially is this so in China, and for obvious reasons. Thus it resulted that with the growth of Republican influence, which will now be shortly traced, the Limited Monarchists began to lose their faith in those British constitutional principles the virtues of which they had formerly proclaimed. The change in sentiment, needless to say, was not made the subject of any pronouncement. In the customary Eastern way the tactics of passivity were employed. Gradually the attendances at the meetings grew less, and for a time they were the gauge by which could be measured popular opinion on the subject of Republican prospects. Finally, it became impossible to secure a quorum, and the Tzu Cheng Yuan was dead. It had served a useful turn, but in the kaleidoscopic rush of events it passed away "unwept, unhonoured, and unsung."

the whole length of the platform before entering the carriage. There were many foreign spectators present, including several military attachés and nearly all the foreign correspondents. Besides the military bodyguards, His Excellency had a personal bodyguard, who carried double swords. The military bodyguard, consisting of the 10th Regiment of the 3rd Division, had arrived by a previous train, and are looking after the safety of His Excellency in the capital.

"The streets between the station and the house were lined with 3,000 men from the 1st Division, the Imperial Guards."

Next morning His Excellency was received in audience. It was the 14th of November. By a curious coincidence it was the anniversary of the death of his late Majesty the Emperor Kuang Hsü. On that day, three years previously, according to the chroniclers, the unhappy Kuang Hsü had penned his last testament, which, as has been seen, prayed for the extinction of Yuan Shih K'ai, and the date had then seemed to mark but the beginning of the end of Yuan's political life. In the Chinese way of things, however, according to the lunar calendar it was not the true anniversary, so that it lacked the picturesque irony that would have otherwise attached to it, and probably had no peculiar significance, though it is scarcely likely that the fact entirely escaped attention.

Apart from this, however, the occasion was a sufficiently striking one. Nearly three years had elapsed since Yuan, as a Grand Councillor and Junior Guardian of the Heir Apparent, had knelt before the Dragon Throne. Then he was on the eve of disgrace. He now returned full of honours and in a position of authority and independence never before enjoyed by a Chinese official, the hope of the reigning House.

Received in audience, whether because he felt unequal to the weight of the charge that was laid upon him, or wished to degrade the Imperial family still further, or felt that his authority must be reaffirmed, or was acting in accordance with the dictates of a sometimes ponderous etiquette, he once more tendered his resignation. It was, of course, refused, and later in the day the refusal and his confirmation in office was thus placed on record:—

"Some time ago Yuan Shih K'ai twice memorialised Us for permission to resign the Premiership. He has now arrived at Peking, and at

to-day's audience he again verbally requested in a sincere manner that he be allowed to resign. We have explained to him the general principle he has to observe, and exhorted him to exert his utmost in undertaking a difficult task. As the present situation is so critical, it ought to be more than the said Premier, who is unselfish and loyal in rendering services to the Empire, could bear again to tender his resignation. We hereby order that he attend the Cabinet to carry out his duties and carefully devise measures for the protection of the welfare of the Empire, so as to fulfil the expectations of both the Throne and the People."

CHAPTER XX

THE MAKING OF CABINETS

THE task which lay immediately ahead of Yuan Kung-pao was the formation of a Government, or a Cabinet, which came to the same thing under the Chinese system, in accordance with the Imperial Decree. It is, however, one thing to decree the creation of a Cabinet, it is quite another to construct one. It was, of course, impossible to select men for office who would be acceptable to the various shades of opinion throughout the country, and the difficulty was immense in the way of satisfying even a substantial section. It would have afforded a spectacle too little in accord with the fitness of things, even for Chinese ideas, to include any of the leaders in open revolt, and outside these there were no outstanding men of admittedly extreme views. Yuan Shih K'ai took the only course that was open to him. He invited a large proportion of men of established reputation and liberal sympathies, many of them old and tried subordinates of other days, with experience of government, to join him. Other places he filled mainly with less known, and in some instances more conservative, statesmen, with a sprinkling of Manchu commoners; while finally he included one of the leaders of the Reform movement which had culminated in the *coup d'état* of 1898.

The accomplished Liang Tun Yen was called to the office for which his experience and charm of manner peculiarly fitted him. A native of Canton, after a distinguished career at Yale he had returned to China, and been rewarded with a small position as interpreter under Chang Chih Tung. In those days the lot of the young and enthusiastic students, on their return to the conservative atmosphere of official life, fresh from the schools of Europe and America, was a hard

one. Their value was unappreciated, and but little regard was paid to the nature of their attainments. An amusing story is told of the return of the batch of students sent abroad at the instance of Dr. Yung Wing, of which Liang Tun Yen was one, and which included names destined to become so distinguished, among them T'ang Shao Yi, T'sai Shou Kie, M. T. Liang, and Jeme Tien Yu. These young men, full of aspirations and informed by lofty ideals, were ordered to Tientsin, where they were to receive appointments at the hands of Li Hung Chang, then in the zenith of his power. Admitted to his presence, they made their obeisance, and waited for the great Viceroy's commands, when without regard either to their training or their individual inclination they were drafted into the various branches of the public service. T'ang Shao Yi and several more were given small appointments in the Customs, where in some instances they suffered the humiliation of being on a lower plane than a class of men whom they had met on their own ground in foreign countries and frequently outdistanced. Jeme Tien Yu, who had taken a high place in the American Schools of Civil Engineering, was commanded to the navy, and it was two years before he was able to secure a transfer to the more congenial atmosphere of an appointment on the Imperial Railways of North China. The fate of others was no less disappointing. But the majority of them, though discouraged, were not of the type to surrender to the difficulties of their position. As time went on they forced their way to the front through sheer ability. Mr. Liang, to whom especial reference is made here, held several offices successively, until he became Customs' Taotai at Hankow, and the right-hand man of the Viceroy, Chang Chih Tung. He held this position at the time of the Boxer troubles. In 1905 he came to take up the same position at Tientsin, under Yuan Shih K'ai. In 1907 he became Vice-President of the Wai Wu Pu, subsequently becoming President. He had been in retirement now for some time, and had occupied himself with visiting England and Europe. He was now recalled by Yuan to take up the headship of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Vice-President was Hu Wei Teh, a Chekiang man,

who had been in the diplomatic service, filling successively the posts of Minister to Russia and Japan. From Japan he had been recalled to join the Wai Wu Pu as a Vice-President, and still occupied this office.

To the Board of Communications T'ang Shao Yi had already been appointed on the fall of Sheng Hsüan Huai. As in the case of Liang Tun Yen, his career is already well known to foreigners. With Yuan in Corea prior to the Chino-Japanese War in 1894, and subsequently Director of the Imperial Railways of North China, he had returned with Yuan Shih K'ai in 1902 as Customs' Taotai at Tientsin. In 1905 he became Governor of Mukden, and in 1908 he returned to Peking to become President of the Ministry, to which he was now recalled, and from which he had been summarily retired in the early part of 1911 in favour of the now disgraced Sheng.

The Vice-Minister at the Board was Mr. M. T. Liang, a Cantonese, formerly a Director of the Imperial Railways of North China, and more recently Customs' Taotai at Shanghai. He also was educated in America, and was a contemporary of his chief and Liang Tun Yen.

To the Navy Board was appointed Admiral Sah, of whom we shall hear more,* with for colleague Tan Hsio Heng, who had been through the Chino-Japanese War and was now a Vice-President of the Board. The Army Board was placed under the control of Wang Shih Chen, a Chihli man, who had held the command in Kiangpeh, and, it will be remembered, had recently been appointed acting Viceroy of the Hukuang provinces on Yuan's recall to Peking to assume the position of Premier. General Tien Wen Lieh, a reliable officer in command at Tung Yung Cheng, was appointed Vice-President.

The Minister of Finance was Yen Hsi, already an experienced official, whose appointment excited no comment. A more striking but not less sound appointment was that of the Vice-Minister, in the person of Chen Chin Tao, also a Cantonese, who was well qualified by theory and practice for the office. A returned student of a younger generation, he was already distinguished in commercial life as the Vice-President of the Ta Ch'ing, or Government Bank, while his

* *Vide* Chapter XXV.

dissertation on the subject of Mathematical Economics for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy is said to have evoked high praise from the Yale Faculty.

Other appointments were scarcely less discriminating. Chang Chien, of whom we shall hear again in connection with events at Nanking, a native of Kiangsu* with great influence in the province, a man who was at once a noted scholar and a pioneer in the field of industrialism, was appointed President of the Board of Industry, Agriculture, and Commerce. Hsi Yen, a Manchu commoner who was already a Vice-President, was continued in office. To the headship of the Ministry of the Interior was promoted Chao Ping Chun, a fellow provincial and trusted friend of Yuan Shih K'ai. Formerly Chief of Police at Tientsin during the latter's tenure of the Viceroyalty, he had subsequently become Vice-President of the Min Cheng Pu, as this Board is called, and consequently already had experience of its working. With him also was associated a Manchu commoner in the person of Wu Chen, who at present held the position of one of the Vice-Presidents, and so only needed to be confirmed. Similarly with the Presidency of the Board of Education. The position was already held by Tang Ching Chung, a native of Kwangsi, and there was no necessity to make any change. A member of the famous Hanlin Doctorate, he would command the support, or at least the sympathy, of that large section of the people who still retained their respect for the old distinctions of culture, while to suit more modern tastes a Hunanese named Yang Tu was appointed Vice-Minister. The appointment was a wise one. Yang Tu was a foreign student who had received his education in Japan, and he was now favourably known as one of the chief draughtsmen of the nineteen fundamental Articles of the Constitution.

To the Presidency of the Board of Dependencies, which for the most part were the appanage of the Manchu House, Ta Shou, a Manchu commoner who was already senior Vice-President of the Board and also held the office of Vice-President of the Tzu Cheng Yuan, was appointed, while Yung Hsun, also a Manchu commoner with previous official

* Kiangsu is the Province of Shanghai, which had already declared itself Republican, and bid fair to become the centre of the revolutionary organisation. *Vide* Chapter XXIII.

experience, gained principally at the Board of the Interior, became his colleague.

Finally it was reserved for the Ministry of Justice to present a combination of talents that was even more picturesque than that afforded by the appointments at the Board of Education. For the post of President was chosen Shen Chia Pen, a Hanlin enjoying the reputation of being the highest authority on Chinese law. Of the old school, and at present one of the members of the Tzu Cheng Yuan, he was especially representative of the scholar class or literati. His colleague was the famous reformer Liang Ch'i Ch'ao, the friend and coadjutor of K'ang Yu Wei.

Thirteen years had now elapsed since Liang Ch'i Ch'ao had barely managed to escape with his life from the fierce wrath of the Empress-Dowager. In the meantime he had found an asylum in Japan, and had occupied himself with writing on political and legal topics. His appointment above all others was doubtless intended to show that the Throne was thoroughly sincere in its desire to effect political reform. But if Yuan Shih K'ai hoped that it would do more than that he was destined to disappointment. Liang was not of the party of those who were responsible for the present outbreak. On the contrary, he frankly disagreed with them. He shared the ideas of his more famous chief, K'ang Yu Wei, and desired to see progress and improvement effected through the channels of existing institutions. To the Republican mind, therefore, his appointment only appealed as a symbol of the point at issue between themselves and the advocates of a monarchical form of government.

Such was the constitution of the Cabinet by means of which Yuan Shih K'ai proposed to rule the country. It contained many diverse elements, and in view of the somewhat limited field from which selection had to be made, could not be fairly criticised. Yuan's task had been one of great difficulty, and he is justly entitled to the credit of a conscientious attempt to meet the requirements of the situation.

With the summoning of his Cabinet came another difficulty. Some were away and others enjoyed indifferent health. Mr. Liang, for example, was in Europe. Mr. T'ang was only slowly recovering from rheumatic fever, and his physical strength was really not equal to the

immense burden of work at the Ministry of Communications. Others either would not or could not become immediately available. The fact was that the moment was unpropitious for men to take any decided stand. The outcome was terribly uncertain, with a bias of opinion in favour of ultimate revolutionary success. From the individualist point of view it was no time for weak and dubious minds. It was rather an occasion for men of courage, of conviction, and resolution, an opportunity for those who had at heart the cause of Constitutional Monarchy opposed to Republicanism to nail their colours to the mast and do what they could to stem the rising tide.

But this was just what the public men of China seemed to find a difficulty in doing. Principles were confused with persons. The advocates of a Limited Monarchy and retention of the Manchu Emperor on the Throne as a means to an end, under proper safeguards, a thoroughly sane and arguable view, were regarded as the friends of the Manchu House and the supporters of a corrupt and useless order. That it should be so was doubtless inevitable. In times of crisis the human mind is dominated by passion rather than reason. And it was only a natural consequence that the more cautious type of mind—and the genius of the people, be it remembered, is in a sense all on the side of caution—preferred to await developments before risking the opprobrium that would attach to what might prove a losing cause.

Those already in office remained of course at their posts, but of the new-comers some really could not come, others temporised, while others absolutely refused to obey the Imperial command.

For a few days it rained resignations. M. T. Liang sought to be relieved from the position of Vice-Minister to the Board of Communications, but was sternly refused. Similarly Chen Chin Tao sought to be released from the duties of the Board of Finance. To his memorial, however, the Throne replied that his training in economics made him necessary to the Board at the present juncture, and he must obey the former Decree. Yen Hsiu displayed none of the alacrity which the situation demanded, and as with these, so with others.

Ultimately, however, the Cabinet, was got together and Yuan Shih K'ai was able to submit his views as to future procedure and relationship between the Throne and the Cabinet. This he did in the form of a memorandum which showed, perhaps even more clearly than anything that had gone before, how complete was the breakdown of the barriers of ancient custom. Matters of purely Imperial Family concern, such as affairs belonging to the Court of Imperial Clansmen, the Imperial Household, the Board of Astronomy and cognate institutions, would continue to be dealt with by the Palace as of yore. But the great departments of Government would carry on their business on conditions of virtual independence of the Throne, and in a manner that would give effect to the principles of the new constitutionalism. Opportunities for Palace interference and intrigue in affairs of State, if they could not cease to be, were at least greatly lessened. Audiences, except to Cabinet Ministers, and then only on such occasions as the requirements of the country's business demanded it, were to be discontinued pending their regularisation.

No longer would the Premier be required to be in daily attendance on the Imperial Court, but only as necessity for an audience might arise. In the matter of address to the Throne, the system of memorialising was considerably modified, while the occasions for the issue of Imperial Decrees were substantially curtailed. Memorials on affairs of State would henceforth be dealt with by the Cabinet, and when they required a reply in the form of Imperial sanction the necessary Decrees would be drafted by the Cabinet, by whom they would then be transmitted to the Prince Regent to receive the Imperial seal. In a word, the Throne would retain its garb of sovereignty, while the Cabinet would exercise the substance of power.

CHAPTER XXI

A PICTURESQUE INTERLUDE

WE have now seen how the Throne yielded to the demand for a Constitution, and the steps which the Tzu Cheng Yuan took to secure the benefit of the Imperial concessions for the people. Note has also been made of the circumstances under which Yuan Shih K'ai assumed the office of Premier at the instance of the Throne, backed up by the unhesitating verdict of the nearest approach to a popular assembly which the country as yet knew. Finally, we have followed the Premier in his efforts to form a Ministry that would meet with the national approval, and to vest in the Cabinet, for the time being, that measure of sovereignty which the Throne had promised to delegate to the representatives of the people. It only now remained, pending the calling into existence of a National Parliament, to bind the reigning House by the most formal ties to the obligations which it had undertaken.

In all the circumstances it might well have been supposed that such a step was unnecessary. The principles of the Constitution had been clearly set forth, unequivocably accepted and formally promulgated by Imperial Decree. The subsequent steps had secured no less complete approval. A study of the past, however, dictated the advisability of something further. Manchu promises were no new thing. The country had a long experience of those subtle processes whereby reforms were delayed or robbed of their effectiveness. Not the least powerful element in the present situation was the rooted distrust of the sincerity of Manchu intentions. Many believed that once the danger was past, once beyond the rocks

which threatened its life, the reigning House would speedily revert to the old conditions, and the glorious opportunity which the courage and good fortune of the revolutionaries had made would be lost never to return. As a course of reasoning on the facts as they then were, such a line of argument was doubtless not free from serious defects. It was, however, cogent and of a nature to make a wide appeal.

That this was the case none recognised more strongly than Yuan Shih K'ai, with the result that a day was now fixed for that binding Oath of Constitution which the Throne had promised to take at the shrine of its Imperial Ancestry, for the performance of that striking ceremony which held so much of interest alike to the political observer, the lover of the picturesque, and the student of primitive institutions.

The time chosen was the morning of the 26th of November. Snow had fallen during the night, and the Forbidden City wore an unfamiliar aspect as the Imperial party, accompanied by the Premier and the members of the Cabinet, made their way to the Sacred Hall of Ancestors, there with frequent prostration and elaborate ceremonial to perform the most solemn of Chinese rites, to abjure for ever the ancient principle of autocracy, to descend to a social compact of which the Imperial Dead had never dreamed and they themselves had failed so lamentably to foresee. The oath itself was couched in the following terms:

"To-day, the sixth day of the tenth Moon of the third year of Hsuan T'ung, WE, Pu Yi, being in Our infancy, the Prince Regent, Tsai Ch'un, performs the sacrificial ceremony on Our behalf, and takes solemn oath before the Tablets of Our Ancestors, Tai Tsu Kao Huangti* and Empress; Tai Tsung Wen Huangti and Empresses; Shih Tsu Chang Huangti and Empresses; Sheng Tsu Jen Huangti and Empresses; Shih Tsung Hsien Huangti and Empresses; Kao Tsung Chun Huangti and Empresses; Jen Tsung Jui Huangti and Empresses; Hsuan Tsung Ch'eng Huangti and Empresses; Wen Tsung Hsien Huangti and Empresses; Mu Tsung Yi Huangti and Empress as follows:

"Since the establishment of Our Dynasty by Tai Tsu Kao Huangti the Throne has been occupied by Our Ancestors continuously for a period of nearly three hundred years. We have since Our succession striven to carry out the wishes of Our predecessor for the establishment of a

* This is one of the terms employed to describe the Emperor.

Constitutional form of government. We have tried Our best to lead the country into the path of progress, and we have deliberated day and night over the scheme. But we have been unsuccessful in finding good men for the administration of Our affairs, and the failure of Our attempts has brought about the disaffection of Our subjects towards Us. Within the space of one month disturbances have spread throughout the length and breadth of the Empire and there is danger of the interruption of Our dynasty. Deeply do we grieve for Our faults.

"The members of the Senate, after consulting the best principles of the various constitutional monarchies and in obedience to the established regulation that no Prince of the Blood should participate in political affairs, have, as a preliminary step, drafted a protocol of nineteen fundamental Articles of Constitution. Other matters not covered by these articles will be taken up at the time of the drafting of the constitution, which shall take place as soon as possible. They have further recommended that the Imperial Parliament be convened at an early date, so as to comply with the requirements of a Constitution. Having in view the present circumstances, We have consented to carry out all these proposals.

"We therefore take Our Oath before Our Imperial Ancestors that We and Our Imperial Descendants shall with Our ministers, soldiers and subjects observe these Articles of the Constitution and shall never act in any manner in contravention thereof. We hope thereby to appease the spirits of Our departed Ancestors and to satisfy the expectation of Our subjects throughout the Empire.

"May Our Ancestors bear witness to this Our Oath." *

Thus was completed the Manchu surrender. Everything possible had been done, as far as conditions at the moment permitted, to ensure the establishment of a Limited Monarchy. And it is not an exaggeration to say that the end in view, given certain further conditions, was adequately secured. Yuan Shih K'ai was now in a position to offer and to guarantee a Constitution.

There was, however, still one very weak point in the situation, and unfortunately it represented a difficulty which could not be overcome. The enforcement of the Manchu promises and the fulfilment of Yuan Shih Kai's own guarantees depended solely on Yuan himself. There was no one to guarantee him, and in the South he was not trusted. Dispassionately regarded, there was every reason to suppose that Yuan Shih K'ai would work out the policy of a Limited Monarchy under the Manchus honestly and

* There then followed the nineteen articles of the Principles of Constitution.

honourably. But the conclusion was a matter of abstract reasoning, which never yet produced conviction where passion had been deeply stirred, and as events proved, and as will be seen in detail as the history is developed, this recognition of a real need for political progress came too late to serve the Manchu cause. Could it have been known the fate of the dynasty was already sealed, and the most that can be said of these concessions from the Manchu point of view was that they placed the Throne in a better position to treat when the time came for negotiating the terms of the ultimate surrender.

CHAPTER XXII

LATER DEVELOPMENTS IN THE COUNTRY

THE first phase of developments in the country has already been described. It is now time to attempt some description of the second phase, which presented many curious features. As has been seen, apart from Wuchang, the large centres refrained at the outset from any action which could be construed as indicating any marked attitude. Then, it will be remembered, came the fall of Kiukiang, Ichang, Changsha, and Hsianfu, followed a week later by the revolt at Taiyuanfu on the 29th of October. From that time onward one secession followed another in a continuous stream until, for all practical purposes, the Imperial Writ had ceased to run in nearly every province, the only exceptions being Chihli and Honan.

These secessions took different forms. In some parts of the country, as for example in Canton, the people declared an independent Republic, and, as it were, seized the opportunity afforded by the diversion at Wuchang to become separate States. In other provinces they adopted what may be perhaps best described as a form of Home Rule. Other places declared themselves in general terms for the Republic of China, while the Shanghai revolutionaries boldly declared themselves "The Military Government of the Chinese People," which shortly became known by the even more ambitious designation of "The Republican Government of China." At a later stage this assumption by Shanghai of the functions of a central organisation gave rise to some heart-burning, but in the event it proved to be justified. Finally Nanking also had a distinct history.

But these differences in principle were not of great im-

portance. The risings were in pursuance of the same general design, and the differences were due to local circumstances and variations in the point of view. Universally South of the Yangtze it meant an anti-Manchu feeling so intense as to be almost unimaginable to those not in close touch with Southern thought. In the North it at least meant a stand for better government, and the recognition of the principle of the management of local concerns by the persons immediately interested. In the North it also had another aspect. Many of the provinces were quite prepared to stand aside and allow the struggle to be fought out between the Manchus and the Republican South. Their idea in pursuing the principle of Tuli, as it was called, was the adoption of an attitude of benevolent neutrality, whereby their own particular province might escape the ruinous effects of civil war. If it is not a particularly intelligible attitude to Western minds, it is by no means uncharacteristic of the perhaps more material modes of thought of the Chinese. A great struggle was apparently inevitable. The feelings of a vast majority were not seriously engaged on either side. The bulk of the people were incapable of appreciating distinctions between political institutions. There can be but little doubt that could the matter have been explained to them in all its bearings, it would have been found that their predilections on the whole were towards Imperialist institutions. But neither cause could have appealed as one in which they were called upon to spend their all, and they would have wished to take a detached view and have sought to be allowed to remain aloof.

Such an attitude necessarily resulted in certain anomalies, but the net result was a distinct gain. It narrowed the issues, and soon showed clearly that while half the country had been worked up to the point of being prepared to fight for Republicanism, the other half of the country, even if not with them, was not prepared to fight against them. Though it was not clearly recognised at the time, it certainly tended to avoid the split between the North and South which at one time had seemed almost inevitable, and at least to postpone a danger which even now has by no means passed away.

It is now time to refer to the facts on which these

general observations are based, so that an impression may be gained of the state of the country at large during the period of the great Manchu concessions in Peking and the attempts of Yuan Shih K'ai to form a stable administration.

A commencement may be made in the South with Canton. It had been expected that the Cantonese would have been amongst the first to throw in their lot with the revolutionaries. For years Canton had been spoken of as the barometer of the feeling against the dynasty. Rather unsoundly, perhaps, for the people have always represented the extreme view and live in a state of chronic unrest, while they display so many points of difference to Chinese in other parts of the Empire that they sometimes have seemed to constitute almost a separate race. The truth is that China is so immense and the conditions of climate and life in the different parts of the country are so various, that the types present points of the greatest dissimilarity both in their physical and mental attributes. These natural differences in modes of thought have become accentuated by Canton's proximity to foreign influences, which has been far greater than in the case of any other Chinese city. For nearly a hundred years it was the only point of contact with the West. For seventy years it has been within the influences that radiate from the colony of Hongkong. It has seen a small rocky island develop into a wonderful city. It sees almost at its gates the second harbour of the world. Above all it sees the Hongkong Chinese living in security. His livelihood and the fruits of his labour are for him alone. The Government, as the Cantonese understands it, and the predatory official are alike unknown.

In such surroundings it is not perhaps surprising that discontent with their own circumstances of life should gradually eat into the minds of the citizens of Canton. They see what is possible under free conditions, and making no allowance for the arts of government, or considering themselves the Englishman's equal in that important respect, they have long been satisfied that they could do better for themselves than under the Manchus.

As a consequence, in recent years there has been more

than one outbreak said to represent attempts to throw off the Manchu domination and to found a Republic for their own city and the province which it dominates.

When the present rising occurred, however, no outward manifestation of an upheaval at Canton took place, and the first obvious indication of trouble was the murder of the Tartar General Feng Shan. It will be remembered that when the attempt was made to initiate the revolution in the spring the Tartar General Fu Chi had been killed by a bomb. Feng Shan was his successor, who, discouraged by the fate of General Fu Chi, had delayed arrival at his post as long as possible. The outbreak of revolution had resulted in his receipt of the strongest orders from Peking to proceed from Shanghai, where he had been resting, as his absence from his post was euphemistically described, and take up his duties forthwith. Thus an unkind fate drove him on to accomplish his inevitable destiny. He had scarcely arrived at Canton when, on the 25th of October, he also was the victim of a bomb.

The outrage was noticed by Imperial Decree, which derives an interest from the fact that it was destined to be the last occasion for the Manchu exercise of the picturesque prerogative which grants those posthumous honours which have been so highly prized.

"A telegraphic memorial from Chang Ming Ch'i * reports that the newly-appointed Tartar General of Canton, Feng Shan, coming to Canton from Shanghai, landed at 8 a.m. on October 25th. At the Gate a sudden explosion of bombs devastated the wall of the private building on the roadside, resulting in the crushing of the sedan-chair, in which Feng Shan was sitting, under the *débris*. The fire was soon extinguished, and the corpse of Feng Shan was discovered. He prays Our Grace to grant posthumous favours.

"Feng Shan, Tartar General of Canton, was promoted from a secretary in a Peking Banner Corps to the post of Lieutenant-General. He was engaged in the training of the different divisions of the army near the capital; he was appointed Tartar General of Chinchou (Hupei), and transferred to Canton in the same capacity. He has done service for a number of years, and has always been diligent in the execution of his duties. He was proceeding to his post, and he had just reached

* The Viceroy of Canton.

Canton, when he was pitilessly assassinated, for which we feel the deepest compassion. As an Imperial grace, he is hereby granted a posthumous title, his rank is raised to that of a Junior Guardian of the Heir Apparent, and he shall be accorded all the highest honours and favours of a Tartar General who has lost his life in a battle. All demerits on record are hereby cancelled. What other honours he is entitled to let the Banner concerned find out and report. When his coffin returns to his native place, the territorial officials along its route shall pay every respect to it; and permission is hereby granted for its entry into the city to hold a funeral. The said Banner is also ordered to ascertain who are the children of the said Tartar General and report to Us for the bestowal of favours."

Such was the characteristic requiem of a public servant whom the Throne saw fit to honour. Long before its appearance, however, a meeting of revolutionaries had been held to consider the situation and determine what action should be taken. This was on the afternoon of the 25th. The result of the meeting seems to have been to determine on an attempt to assume control on the basis of complete provincial autonomy. One resolution, indeed, went so far as to pledge the meeting to refuse assistance either in men or money outside the province on the ground of their own financial difficulties. It was a somewhat curious way, at first sight, of giving effect to the general understanding of a concerted rising, but in the event, as will be seen, it proved to be mainly a matter of form, and at a later stage Canton co-operated freely.

It was some days before the resolution of independence was put into operation, and not until the 9th of November was the declaration actually made. The Viceroy, than whom none, as will be seen, had better reason to be aware of the futility of resistance, fled to the British Consulate, and was thence given safe escort to Hongkong.

Such was the course of events as they appeared even to close observers, who had to confess to being unable to fathom the enigma of Central China four weeks in revolt and Canton striking but a single isolated blow. The problem became even more complex when it was remembered that the Viceroy, Chang Ming Ch'i, was a strong man, the same who had crushed the incipient rising in the spring, who would be quick to act and merciless in his execution. It appears, however, from an investigation of Chinese sources

of information, that the explanation of this period of inaction was a very simple one. The revolutionaries were now much better organised and they were anxious to have the Viceroy on their side. Chang Ming Ch'i, on the other hand, felt that he would not be able to cope successfully with another rising, and was impressed with the futility of struggling against what he had a shrewd suspicion would prove to be the inevitable. In these circumstances it is alleged that an understanding was arrived at between the parties, whereby the Viceroy should become the Military Governor of Canton, which should declare itself a Republic independently of Wuchang, pending future developments.

The advantages of the arrangement from both points of view were obvious. On the one hand the Governor-General would save his position, and on the other the revolutionaries would secure the adherence of a strong man and gain the city.

Everything was working in the right direction, and the declaration was about to be made when the news reached Canton of the Imperialist victory of October 27th at Hankow. This put a somewhat different complexion on the situation. Hitherto it had been a tale of revolutionary gains, but now the doubt seems to have arisen in Chang Ming Ch'i's mind as to whether the movement would be crowned with that success which he had anticipated. The destruction of Hankow did nothing to decrease his indetermination, and several days of vacillation ensued, until finally the revolutionaries declared themselves and the Viceroy fled.

On the defection of Chang Ming Ch'i, the headship of Canton was vested in one Hu Han Min, a man of thirty years of age, who was editor of a newspaper but without experience of government. Canton, however, is the last place to be left without the strong and experienced hand. The turbulent element is very turbulent, and the waterways which go to make up the Canton Delta are infested with pirates.

It was not long before the effects of the change became manifest. For a day or two the city enjoyed peace, but it soon became the prey of armed robbers, taking advantage

of its defenceless state. On the 11th it was reported that a band of between six and seven thousand were virtually holding up the city, which the better class of the people were rapidly deserting. In the province itself piracy and violence were the order of the day, and it was manifest that forces had been set in motion and restrictions relaxed, which were rapidly resulting in a state of chaos and grave disorder. So bad, indeed, were conditions that the Government which had set itself up had recourse to the unusual expedient of seeking the assistance of a well-known robber chief, by the name of Lu Lan Ch'ing, who had seized the occasion to emerge from his long-enforced retirement. He could command, it was estimated, a force of some 30,000 outlaws. Arrangements were now made whereby these people policed the city, and General Lu, as he became designated, achieved a glorious consummation of a picturesque if not altogether blameless career. The adoption of this scheme immediately created a fresh difficulty. The Black Flags, a secret society numbering many thousands, considered that they should have been called upon in the hour of need. A militant body composed of persons of predatory instincts, they had been prominent on many occasions, notably in the war with the French in 1885, and they considered they had deserved well of their country. Their resentment was not a thing to be despised. Their leader was Liu Jung Fa, who had achieved fame in the French war. He was now a man of seventy-five years of age, and considerable friction now threatened between him and General Lu Lan Ch'ing. Fortunately the differences between these rival competitors for civic honour were able to be composed, and Canton entered upon an era of comparative quiet.

In the matter of conversion to Republicanism, the province of Kuangtung at large was not long in following the lead of the capital city. On the 10th Fatshan went over, and on the 11th charge was taken of Swatow by a band of revolutionaries which had been dispatched for that purpose. On the day following they took Chaochowfu, the terminus of the short railway running inland. Within a week most other cities in the province were also in revolutionary hands.

The example of Canton was immediately followed in the other provinces of the extreme South. At Foochow, in Fukien, the authorities ventured on resistance to the revolutionary demands, with the result that fighting took place. But the issue was not long in doubt. Soon came the news that the Viceroy had committed suicide, while the Tartar General had been beheaded.

Nor was the Province of Kuangsi behindhand, only with the difference that the Viceroy submitted to what he regarded as the inevitable and himself became the head of the new Government, with the local Assembly as the State Parliament. About the same time the Provinces of Yunnan and Kweichow also declared for the new order.

In the North, Shansi and Shensi were already largely in rebel hands, and Tientsin, the chief commercial centre of the North, and seat of the Chihli Viceroy, was wavering.*

But the chief interest centred in the doings of the Province of Shantung. Towards the end of October, the revolutionary agents began to gain the upper hand, eventually engineering a mass meeting at Chinanfu early in November. The way had been prepared by the industrious circulation of a stirring appeal in semi-classical style, emanating from Wuchang in the name of General Li Yuan Hung. The Eastern Lu (Shantung), they were told, was the earliest to adopt civilisation and in the forefront of culture. Favoured by nature in its mountains and its rivers, it had produced generations of sages and worthy men. It was noted for the bravery and fighting qualities of its inhabitants. Their glorious history was a constant theme. They were now besought to hasten to unfurl the patriotic banner and befriend the Hupei Army. Finally, imagination was stirred by the aspiration to fly the flag which should be the symbol of United China freed from an alien rule upon the Holy Mountain of Confucius, Taishan.†

Inflamed by this appeal, the meeting at Chinanfu formu-

* In the event Tientsin never declared itself.

† A translation of this interesting document by Mr. H. Porter, Acting Consul at Chefoo, will be found in the White Book, China No. 1, of 1912, at p. 88.

lated the following eight demands for immediate transmission to the Central Government:—

"1. That the Government shall not borrow foreign loans for military operations against our own nationals.

"2. That the Government shall immediately declare the cessation of war and shall accede to whatever demands the Southern Army may make.

"3. That the new army stationed within the territory of Shantung shall not be commissioned for service outside of the province.

"4. That the usual contributions from Shantung to the Central Government and the surplus provincial revenue shall not, for the present, be remitted to the Imperial Exchequer, but shall be retained for military and charitable purposes in that province.

"5. That in the Constitution it shall be clearly stated that China shall be a Confederation of States.

"6. That the system of provincial officials and local taxation shall be decided by the province, and the Government shall not interfere therewith.

"7. That the regulations of the Provincial Assembly shall be the Constitution of the province and shall be revised or modified at liberty.

"8. That the province shall have the freedom to train troops for local protection."

As will be seen, the terms of these demands, amongst other things, involved a very advanced degree of self-government. They were accompanied by a threat that if not complied with within three days they would be followed by complete separation from Peking.

Such was the weakness of the Central Government that they in effect yielded on all but the second and fifth points. As regards the latter it was pointed out that the stipulation for a Confederation of States was a matter of concern to all the provinces, and could not be determined without their consent, while a refusal of the former was veiled under the painfully weak suggestion that the demand was one which merely concerned the Southern Army.

Whether the revolutionary party in Shantung was dissatisfied with this reply, which was most conciliatory, or had altered their ideas in the meantime, is not clear, but the fact remains that, despite a reply within the stipulated time, the Chinanfu revolutionaries decided, on the 8th of November, that the time had come to assume control and declare their independence. Accordingly a committee was deputed to

wait upon the Governor, Sun Pao Chi, who was to be given the choice of going with them or losing his head. The weakness of the Governor's position left him with no alternative but to become the Military Governor, or Tu Tu, to give him the Chinese title adopted by the seceding provinces for their chief magistrates, and Shantung joined what was rapidly becoming the majority.

Still further North at Mukden was seen the creation a few days later of a Committee of Public Safety. For some time the situation had been one of acute anxiety. General Lan Tien Wei, it will be remembered, was the General in command of the troops, and the city had a tolerably strong revolutionary organisation. On the other side was the Viceroy, Chao Erh-Hsün, one of the strongest of the Manchus, a man undoubtedly to be reckoned with. Hence eventually a compromise, whereby strict neutrality was to be maintained on both sides, and the city and eastern provinces would be spared, it was hoped, from internecine strife. A gain, if carried through successfully, from the humanitarian, if a substantial loss from the Manchu, point of view.

It is interesting to note that the same principle was discussed at one or two other places in North China, especially by the Provincial Assembly at Kaifengfu, the capital of Honan, without, however, the necessity for adopting it arising. Similarly at Tientsin the gentry at one stage, though much later than this, rallied to the support of the Viceroy, proposing to take over control on a basis of neutrality in order to save themselves from the horrors and losses of civil war.

In the South of China, however, the temper of the country, as we have seen, was far removed from compromise. In addition to the important secessions already recorded, the early days of November saw nearly every city of commanding importance pass from beneath the Imperial sway. On the 1st of November Nanchang fell. The following week saw the Republican flag waving over Hangchow and Soochow, those twin cities of happiness and plenty set in the region of rich silks and fair women, so delectable in Chinese eyes. "Heaven is above," runs the proverb, "but on earth are the Chows* of Hang and Soo."

* An administrative division of a province.

On November 3rd Shanghai turned Republican, embarking on a course which requires a chapter to describe. Finally, by the middle of the month, Ningpo, Chinkiang, Nganking, Amoy and a dozen other places had declared for the new order. Nearly everywhere the revolutionary victories had been bloodless, suggesting, south of the Yangtze at least, an almost universal absence of enthusiasm for the Imperialist cause.

CHAPTER XXIII

SHANGHAI AND THE REPUBLICAN MANIFESTO

THE change of Shanghai from the old regime to Republicanism was performed rapidly and without difficulty. There was no Manchu garrison to arouse strife or to endeavour to defend the existing order. The officials happened to be of a type which excited neither animosity nor bitterness of feeling. Moreover, the leaders of the outbreak had laid their plans well, and if they had allowed some considerable time to elapse since the outbreak at Wuchang before declaring themselves, at least they had utilised the time to complete their arrangements, and had spared no trouble to avoid leaving anything to chance.

At the beginning of November the conclusion was formed that the time had arrived to take action, and accordingly on the third of that month they addressed a dispatch to His Majesty's Consul-General, advising him of the course which was about to be pursued. The dispatch was dated, as had been the case at other places, in the 4609th year of Huangti, and purported to emanate from the Military Government of the Chinese people.

Having taken this step, the first overt action took place between four and five o'clock in the afternoon, when a preliminary attack was made on the Kiangnan arsenal. But it was not until the next morning that its capture was effected. The arsenal, which is situated on the river front, has its main entrance on the land side, but it can also be reached at low tide along the foreshore. About six o'clock in the morning of the 4th what may be designated by the name of an attack, if that may be called an attack where there is virtually no defence, was made from both sides, the attack on the big entrance gates being made first. While the troops inside

had their attention thus engaged a body of revolutionaries came up along the foreshore with a view to forcing an entrance in the rear. In this manœuvre they were successful, though they need not have troubled themselves to formulate any such elaborate strategic scheme. Though their presence was detected at quite an early stage by the troops, who might have barred their progress, no serious effort was made to that end, and it subsequently transpired that of the soldiers in charge the majority were either actively or passively disloyal, and that the only suggestion of resistance came from a small body, some fifty in number. So it came about that with hardly a casualty on either side the arsenal was at the command of the revolutionaries.

The fall of the arsenal, a serious blow to the Imperialists, on the morning of the 4th was followed by the fall of the Woosung forts at the mouth of the Huangpu river, the transfer taking place quietly about four o'clock in the afternoon. The officers of the forts had evidently been apprised of the revolutionary sentiment among the troops, for on hearing the result of the operations in Shanghai they decided to retire and leave the field open. With the officials away, the troops quietly donned the white badge of revolution and held the forts to the orders of the new Republican authorities.

On Sunday morning, November 5th, the revolutionary authorities took charge of the Shanghai station and the Shanghai-Nanking railway. Up to this time the railway property had been guarded by the Shanghai volunteers, on the ground that locally the authority of the Central Government had ceased to exist, while the revolutionaries had not yet established themselves in a position to protect the property. This, however, had now been done. Chinese Shanghai had definitely cast in its lot with the new order, and Foreign Shanghai, whatever the theory might be, had no alternative but in practice to recognise the change.

The new Government inaugurated itself by formal notification to the Foreign Municipality of Shanghai and the issue to the people of the following Proclamation :—

"The Shanghai Military Government proclaims that since the public spirited movement at Wuchang the multitude of our brothers are of one mind, and wherever our flag of public duty has reached, it has without exception been jubilantly and joyously received. The principal cities of

every province have been recaptured, and in no case has tranquillity been prejudiced.

"Shanghai is the great port of the South-East, famous throughout the World for open trade. If once a great military body were assembled the consequent damage would of course be no light matter. We have now received the commands of the Military Government merely to order all classes to give their submission. Now all have complied, and it is evident that all are unanimous in their sentiment of hostility to the Manchu Race. However, it is our wish that our closely beloved brother men shall still each continue to ply his calling and trade peaceably, and by no means take the opportunity to encroach upon the lives, wealth, and property of foreigners. In a brief moment a Republic will be established and all will enjoy peace."

The enthusiasm which greeted this document quickly made it clear that no sort of doubt could exist as to the genuineness of the Republican, or at least anti-Manchu, sentiment throughout Shanghai. A Proclamation in picturesque terms, issued a little later by "The Military Government of the Republic of China," made the nature of the sentiment even clearer. "For over two hundred years," ran this document, "our Chinese brethren have been under the government of the Manchus without revenge. We are every day sleeping on brushwood and eating gall. The Manchus," continued the Proclamation in a sentence illustrating the rooted distrust of Manchu promises, "under a make-believe of allowing Constitutional Government, in their skilful way of guarding against the uprising of the Chinese, are really making us support five millions of a nomadic tribe at the expense of four hundred millions of the descendants of Holy Han."

Unfortunately the Proclamation was not confined to a mere pronouncement of revolutionary aims and ideals. At a later stage it promised the abolition of taxation, and thus at a stroke deprived the party of the principal resources of government and the sinews of war.

In the meantime an administration had been formed for the purpose of governing the district and forming a foundation for a Republican Government. One Li Ping Hsu, the President of the Shanghai Chinese City Municipality and a prominent merchant, was appointed Chief of the Civil Administration, and Ch'en Chi Mei was made Military Governor. The well-known Dr. Wu Ting Fang, an English barrister,

who was for many years Chinese Minister to the United States, and more recently first President of the Board of Agriculture, Industry, and Commerce, one of the new departments of State on Western lines founded by the late Empress-Dowager in 1903, became the Chief of Foreign Affairs. Li Hsieh Ho became Military Commander with Chen Han Ch'in, who had held the post of the Chief of the Chapei Police, as Vice-Military Commander. Mr. Yu Ha Hsiang, Managing Director of the Ning-Shao Steamship Company and Compradore * to the Bank of the Netherlands, became secretary to Dr. Wu, while Wang I Ting, another merchant, became the Chief of Commercial Affairs. The important matter of the regulation of financial matters was left in the hands of Mr. Ch'en Man Yun, a little-known man with a local reputation for honesty and talent.

Simultaneously the revolutionaries were inviting recruits, and the great number applying enabled them to make a selection with some care. As a result, unlike most revolutionary causes, which have to rest content with any material that comes to hand, the recruiting officers were able to limit themselves to men between eighteen and thirty-five years of age, in robust health, who could pass the physical test of lifting without undue strain a weight of about 80 lbs. Morally, candidates must bear a reputation for honesty, be keen supporters of the revolutionary cause, and free from the opium habit.

With these necessary preliminary matters adjusted, the Revolutionary Committee, or the Local Government as they had constituted themselves, set about the congenial task of enlarging their field, addressing the chief provincial centres in the terms of the following communication, which was in the name of Mr. Ch'en Chi Mei, the Military Governor, and was dated the 13th of November:—

"To the Wuchang, Changsha, Anking, Nanchang, Soochow, Chekiang, Taiyuan, Hsian, Foochow, Canton, Chinan, Kueiling, Yunnan, and Kueichow Military Governors.

"Hundreds of matters await attention. Ever since the rising of our

* Compradores are Chinese merchants attached to foreign firms, whose functions elude definition. Their principal duties are to assist the foreign merchant in his operations with Chinese.

patriotic citizen army, without a central organisation to represent the whole nation, foreigners hesitate and foreign intercourse is most difficult. I am filling the post of importance at Shanghai with an effort, for this place is a thoroughfare in the South-East, and the source of funds and arms. The question of international relations is still more weighty, affecting as it does the whole of our interest. Mr. Wu Ting Fang has agreed to bear the brunt of foreign intercourse, and his appointment has been tacitly acquiesced in by the friendly Powers. We congratulate ourselves on having fortunately secured the services of such a competent man."

The communication, which was of great length, went on to inform the provinces that telegrams from Hupei and Chinkiang had been received confirming this view of the importance of establishing a central government in a central position. From that point the transition was easy to the suggestion of Shanghai as the place naturally indicated, and to the request that they would in the meantime "send representatives immediately to Shanghai to hold a grand conference in order to decide this vitally important question."

While awaiting the developments which it was expected would result from this invitation, Dr. Wu Ting Fang occupied himself with the preparation of his famous letter to the Prince Regent and the great Republican Manifesto. The former was in the following terms:—

"Since the risings of Szechuen and Hupei, the issue of the self-accusation Decree was immediately followed by excess in the form of an atrocious murder of human beings,* culminating in the severance without a struggle of more than ten provinces within ten days. The general condition of circumstances points to the inevitable conclusion that apart from 'Republicanism' there is no way to avoid sacrifice of lives or to preserve peace between Man and Han.† The opinion of the public is unanimous, and foreigners who possess common sense express no different views. Thus the monarchical form of Constitutional Government cannot possibly meet with toleration in the future of China.

"In the interest of the Emperor and Your Highness, you should just now regard yourself as Yao or Shen by obtaining the best man for the world. (*Note.*—Both these Emperors of antiquity abdicated their thrones in favour of the best men they could find.) If you will but wake up and change your attitude, and co-operate in 'republicanising China,' treating the citizens with justice and consideration, as the civilisation of the world demands, the citizens will doubtless be able to show you every courtesy

* The destruction of Hankow. † Manchus and Chinese.

in return, with due regard to ensuring your living in wealth and honour, as becomes the Imperial Household, the peace and safety of the Manchu clans being not excluded from our aim. Otherwise, the curse of war will be prolonged and extended, the hate accumulated and intensified. Since the atrocity indulged in by the Northern Army has been so inhuman, how can it be possible for the Great Seat to exist alone?

"We, Ting Fang and others, cannot sit by and view such a contention in ease. It is for this reason that we presume to tender you this, our final faithful advice. Our voice is already hoarse, and our tears exhausted, and no more can be said."

This document is of interest rather than of any great value. The Manifesto, or Address to the Foreign World, on the other hand, was of considerable importance, and constituted the formal statement of the revolutionary case. It was issued on the 17th of November, and marked the point at which the movement, which had hitherto been without form, began to assume shape. The Shanghai action in making the attempt to centralise was thoroughly sound, and though it excited the jealousies of other provinces, they could not afford to be unrepresented. By the time they all arrived the necessity of conferring as to the best central point at which to rally their forces had passed away. But in the meantime Shanghai constituted itself that point, and the issue of the Manifesto largely concluded the matter in foreign eyes.

The terms of this document are of course already familiar to most observers of current affairs, but in the history it must receive its place. It is one of the important documents of the Revolution, and however well-known its contents may be, its claims to reproduction cannot be ignored.

"To Our Foreign Friends.

"Prompted by many inquiries by leading articles in the Press and by the letters which have appeared in the *North China Daily News* and other papers, we feel it incumbent upon us to express the deep sense of our appreciation of the evident world-wide interest and sympathy taken in the revolutionary movement and briefly to set forth the position of the Revolution party to-day.

"It is unnecessary to indulge in lengthy explanations of the reasons leading to the present Revolution. They are notorious. The Manchu Government has in the course of its dominance of China demonstrated its incapacity to rule its people or conduct the affairs of the nation in a manner compatible with the forward movement signalising the modern

history and development of the civilised world. The Manchu Dynasty has, by its benighted conceptions and barbaric leaning, brought China to a position of degradation. The nation is scorned, and its institutions and general retrogressive policy are the objects of contempt.

"For decades the enlightened among the Chinese endeavoured by peaceful means to promote and establish ambition among the people for an elevated line of progressive conduct. They have failed.

"The foreign Powers individually and collectively have stood hammering at the door of China for centuries pleading for the diffusion of knowledge, a reformation of national services, the adoption of Western sciences and industrial processes, a jettisoning of the crude, out-of-date and ignoble concepts which have multiplied to keep the nation without the pale of the great family constituting the civilised world. They have failed.

"The Manchu Dynasty has triumphantly carried on its reactionary policy despite the strongest pressure exerted from within and without, until the oppressed people could endure the disgrace and the contumely of it no longer. They rose, and with what result the history of the past few weeks has shown.

"The Manchu Dynasty has been tried by a patient and peaceful people for centuries, and has been found more than wanting. It has sacrificed the reverence, forfeited the regard, and lost the confidence freely reposed in it by all Chinese.

"Its promises in the past have proved delusions and snares. Its promises for the future can carry no weight, deserve no consideration, and merit no trust.

"The popular wish is that the dynasty must go.

"The leaders of thought in the revolutionary movement abhor bloodshed.

"We have, it is safe to say, evidenced a toleration unexpected by our foreign friends.

"We have controlled the forces for evil in a manner which should characterise this revolution as the least sanguinary in the history of the world, when the sins of the country and nature of the masses are taken into consideration.

"We have memorialised the Prince Regent to secure the abdication of the Manchus upon the guarantee of full protection for the life and property not only of the Imperial family, but of all Manchus.

"We have issued a manifesto to every province urging union upon a common ground.

"We have exhorted the whole of the people to sink racial prejudices, to combine for the betterment and advancement of the nation, and to respect and protect, not only their own, but foreign interests to the utmost extent in our power.

"We have striven for order and have created no chaos in those provinces, cities, and towns that have of their own volition come under our banners.

"We have retained officers of the old regime where such have desired to remain, and have subscribed to the new regulations for the conduct of

provincial affairs. The Viceroy of Yunnan, the Governor of Soochow, the Governor of Anking are instances in point.

"We have issued telegraphic appeals to the fourteen provinces that have declared for independence from Manchu dominance to send delegates to Shanghai to form a National Assembly.

"We have, in short, taken every possible step to protect vested interests, safeguard international obligations, secure continuance of commerce, and shield education and religious institutions; and, what is even more important, striven continually to maintain law and order, sustain peace, and promote a constructive policy upon sound and enduring grounds.

"The mind of the people is made up for a change. The shameless destruction of life and property that has signalised the latter days of the Manchus' attempt to resist the termination of their reign is but their characteristic valedictory message to the world.

"To the Manchus is the blame for a continuance of hostilities and the perpetration of outrages. They have received from a majority of the provinces an unmistakable pronunciamento of the popular wish; they know that their race is run and that the China of to-morrow can never be as China of yesterday.

"The revolutionary leaders have appealed to them to abdicate in order to put a period to the useless fighting in the field, to prevent wanton bloodshed, to restore the peace of mind of the whole of the populace and to tranquillise trade.

"The hand of the people is now at the plough, and they must of necessity push on to the uttermost end of the furrow.

"We ask our foreign well-wishers to unite with us in our appeal to the Prince Regent to abdicate and so end the strife that is now shaking the land. For our part, our conduct is open to the full view of the world. We are fighting for what Briton fought in the days of old; we are fighting for what Americans fought; we are fighting for what every nation that is now worthy of the name has fought in its day.

"We are fighting to be men in the world; we are fighting to cast off an oppressive, vicious, and tyrannous rule that has beggared and disgraced China, obstructed and defied the foreign nations, and set back the hands of the clock of the world.

"We must not be judged by the past; we are trying to bring China into her own; to elevate her to the standard that the people of the Occident have ever been urging her to attain, and the stumbling block to-day, as it has been during the past centuries, is the Manchu Dynasty.

"Our foreign friends must from a sheer sense of fairness concede that we have the right to win the laurels of freedom by fair fight in the field, and to avoid the rest we again appeal to them to use their influence to secure in the Manchu mind recognition of the utter hopelessness of the continuance of the dynasty.

"That is all that China requires. The Manchus may remain in full enjoyment of citizenship, will be entitled to the fullest equality and freedom, and are urged to rest in possession of their lands and property for the future good of the State."

CHAPTER XXIV

IMPERIAL OVERTURES FOR PEACE

ONCE more we have to go back some distance in point of time in order to take up the threads where they were dropped at Hankow.

The destruction of the city was followed by a period of comparative inactivity, or at least of less rigorously directed activity, on the part of the Imperialists. It could not be described as a lull, for there was in fact no day when at least a few shots were not exchanged between the rival batteries, while the fighting zeal of the revolutionist forces left the Imperialist soldiers but little peace.

The military position was but a reflex of the political situation. As at an earlier stage, the Imperialists as represented by the mind of Yuan Shih K'ai were willing and anxious to treat for a settlement on generous lines. As we have seen, the Manchu House had already made vast concessions. They had declared their willingness to abandon the substance of authority and to rest content with the shadow of regal state. It was freely hoped that this would satisfy the revolutionary demands, and it was generally thought, even to a large extent by their sympathisers, that the solution was one which could and should be accepted. The ambition of the extreme reforming wing to establish a Republic did not commend itself to those most closely acquainted with the spirit of the Chinese Polity and the Soul of the People. As has been more than once hinted, the headship of the Son of Heaven was something like a cult. To the Chinese mind he was the head, not only of his own people but of the entire human race. When he proceeded at the appointed seasons, now in a chill winter's dawn, now in the refreshing cool of a summer's morning, to

that sacred spot characteristically described as the "Centre of the Universe," and on that white marble altar called the "Altar of Heaven," sacrificed to the Supreme Being, he symbolised the sentiment of the whole nation. Still more so when the Imperial Hall of Ancestors, the shrine of the great Imperial dead, was the scene of his devotions.

Alive to these things, Yuan Shih K'ai had his emissaries at work endeavouring to arrange terms of peace. He was not disposed to push on his military advantages save as a last resource.

The revolutionaries, on the other hand, seemed to desire the continuance of the fight. Inspired by that self-sacrificing courage begotten of causes, good and bad, that lay hold on the hearts of men, the unequal struggle continued to rage spasmodically.

The issue remained the same—Yuan Shih K'ai offered a Limited or Constitutional Monarchy under the Manchus, while nothing would satisfy the revolutionaries but a Republic, or at least a Government in which the Imperial Family had no place.

In the meantime Yuan's messengers were in the revolutionary citadel at Wuchang strenuously urging peace. Peace, however, was still far away, and after an exchange of courtesies the Imperialist ambassadors had to return whence they had come, back across the great river. They bore with them a letter from Li Yuan Hung which threw an instructive light on the revolutionary point of view. The letter was in the following terms:—

"Your two envoys, Liu and Tsai, having explained your benevolent intentions and your love for the Chinese, it is evident that you are not going to inflict any injury upon your brethren. For this we give thanks.

"Of course, the Manchu Government would be highly pleased if the four conditions you name could be agreed to, but you must understand that the Chinese have suffered too much oppression under the Manchus.

"Since the slaughter of the reformers the Government has continually promised to establish Constitutional rule and to bring forward the date for the calling of the first Parliament, but its promises have come to naught. The assassination of Erh Ming and Fu Chi, the attempt to destroy the viceregal yamen at Canton with a bomb, and the mutiny at Ngankin, were all bloody protests against the Manchu Monarchy, but all failed to induce the Throne to do more than issue Edicts full of



COLONEL T'SAI T'ING KAN:
YUAN'S MESSENGER OF PEACE



H.E. TIEH LIANG:
TARTAR GENERAL AT NANKING.

promises. Everything remains as it was. The Manchu Government has tried various tricks to gain a hold on the people's hearts. But it has no real intention of altering the system of government. Turn your eyes toward those that are Presidents of the various Boards and Viceroys and Governors of Provinces, and you will see that all the principal posts are occupied by Manchus. What an insignificant part the Chinese have played in politics! The national treasury and the national army are the foundations of the Empire, and both are in the grasp of ignorant, childish Manchus. Surely you cannot bear with composure to see the property and lives of four hundred millions of Chinese wasted by a mere handful of Manchus!

"Are you not the most famous and most able man among the Chinese? Have you forgotten that, after you had been relieved of your command of the northern troops, and your political influence had been weakened, you narrowly escaped being murdered as well as cashiered? All this is evidence of the Manchus' jealousy of the Chinese.

"Since Hupei was made independent, many other provinces have joined the cause with heart and soul. The Manchu Government has fallen into a swoon and can no longer stand by its own strength. So it is trying the scheme by which it quelled the Taiping rebellion—using Chinese to kill Chinese. If you are willing to be reinstated on such a commission, then you have superhuman patience.

"In your dispatch you state emphatically that the Government must be Constitutional. In reply I wish to explain that in this age, whether a government be monarchical or republican, it must ultimately be founded on constitutionalism, and there is little difference between a republic and a constitutional monarchy. The form of the Government will be settled in the conference of delegates from the various provinces. Whatever form it takes, it will not violate constitutionalism.

"It is generally agreed among the people that the Manchus must not be allowed to have any voice in this conference. If we had agreed to your terms, had you any means of compelling the Manchu Government to fulfil its promises?

"For you to live in retirement for your own enjoyment as you have done is of no benefit to China.

"The success of the present movement has come by the strength not of men but of God. What man could convert Szechuen, Kiangsi, Anhui, Kiangsu, Kuangtung, Kuangsi, Yunnan, Kueichow, Shansi and Shensi to republicanism? Besides all the gunboats and torpedo destroyers have turned revolutionary. There is no Manchu force to hinder us from marching on Peking with the exception of your little army.

"The renaissance of the Chinese and the maintenance of China's sovereignty depends on you. If you are really in sympathy with the Chinese, you should take your opportunity to turn Republican with your troops and attack Peking. If you are hankering after dignities and honours that the Manchu Government may confer, then you should pray that the revolutionary army may hasten its march to the Yellow River. For, when the Manchus see that they cannot withstand the revolutionary

advance, they will give you all the higher honours to induce you to fight for them. If we should yield now, it is to be feared that the honours bestowed on you would vanish in a few days. Remember the proverb: 'When the rabbits are caught the hounds are cooked.' Your merit would be so great that you would not avoid jealousy, and your power would make you liable to constant suspicion. It would be impossible for you to retire again to Changtefu. I would remind you that the Empress-Dowager is still living and that she will never forgive the slaughter of the reformers. Consider if there is any affection between yourself and the Manchus. All of us, working together, can complete the emancipation of the Chinese, and none of us are willing to continue under the rule of the Manchus.

"As to your suggestion that foreign Powers may seize this opportunity of bringing about the partition of China, we have read many articles from foreign papers, and we feel sure that none of them will do us any harm during our civil war.

"We have learned from a wireless telegram to a certain gentleman that Peking is in great agitation and that the young Emperor has fled. Should this be true, the ruling race has already lost its dignity and has no right to present our territory to any foreign Power.

"It is reported that the Manchu Government has recalled you to Peking. If that is so, I offer two suggestions for your consideration. In the first place, it may be that the Government suspects your loyalty and intends by recalling you to deprive you of your military authority: in that case, you may disobey the summons by virtue of the military rule that a General need not obey an Imperial Edict when he is on service abroad.

"Secondly, if Peking is actually in a critical condition I must tell you a story. During the Boxer rising, when the international force entered Peking, they summoned Li Hung Chang. That was an opportunity for Li to become Emperor. But he was stubborn and lost the chance. You may learn from his experience.

"Mencius said that a man with complete education will protect the people. I am but a military man and do not know much, but I have learned largely from Mencius, so that I have no desire except to protect the people. It is believed that your experience and ability are much higher than mine. Yet I am sorry for you that you have to consider things so very long before you can make up your mind. Remember that we should never hesitate or delay in doing what is benevolent or righteous. We should do the right thing at once.

"All the brethren of this land are waiting for you. Do not face me any longer with a mask.

"Your delegates will inform you further in regard to my sentiment."

CHAPTER XXV

THE FALL OF HANYANG

YUAN SHIH K'AI, it will be remembered, had been appointed Premier by Imperial Edict on the 1st of November, with instructions "to perform the outlines of his task and then to proceed forthwith to Peking," there to attend to the duties which awaited him. He did not leave Hsiaokan, however, until November 11th, and that he left the front at all at this juncture may be taken as significant rather of his conviction that the time for the conclusion of peace had not yet arrived than of any desire to comply with the Imperial wish for his early presence in the capital. While there was any real hope of arranging conditions for the determination of hostilities the moral effect of his continued presence in Hupei was more likely to prove conducive to the end in view, and a few days further delay in the reorganisation that was to take place in the Central Government could not materially affect the situation.

The time had now come, however, for the resumption of serious operations. Despite the activities of the revolutionaries, the measures taken on the Imperialist side had scarcely exceeded the minimum necessary to the maintenance of their position. As far as could be seen, the only offensive operation on the part of the Imperialists was an attack on the Chingshan forts, which it will be remembered had been constructed on the south bank of the Yangtze on the 28th of October. The guns rendered the position at Kilometre Ten an uncomfortable one; they also threatened the line of communications and endangered trains bringing supplies to the front. It was desirable that something should be done to remedy this, and consequently a loyalist force was sent across the river to the Wuchang

side some distance below Chingshan. The attack was delivered on the morning of the 4th of November and failed. The revolutionary position was found to be stronger than had been anticipated and the Imperialist force was repulsed. It is significant of the indeterminate state of the Imperialist mind at this time that the attack was not renewed. Again it was apparent that much the same spirit pervaded the Imperialist counsels as after their victory on the 27th of October at Kilometre Ten. The soldiers were in good heart and excellent fighting trim. On the whole their discipline was good and they were well in hand. There were of course a few desertions, and unfortunately it seems to have been only too well authenticated by local observers that many of those hideous crimes that are so frequently the accompaniments of war were perpetrated on the luckless inhabitants of the country that was the theatre of operations. It is also to be feared that they were allowed to go unchecked.* But as a fighting machine during this period the Imperialist forces, despite much that has been said to the contrary, were undoubtedly in good order. Equally no doubt they were hampered by the political exigencies of the situation. Yuan Shih K'ai at this stage was determined to make an effort as each step was gained to attempt pacific measures. Possibly he conceived that he had no alternative. The time had passed when the strong hand might have made the attempt to crush the movement. Now it had spread too far and men must be dealt with gently, by concessions, and not by driving them till their backs were against the wall, fighting in despair. Thus the Imperialists did little more than mark time.

As we have seen, however, the way of peace did not commend itself to the revolutionaries. They, too, doubtless conceived that they had scarcely an alternative. They had fought under the banner bearing the legend "Destroy the Manchu and restore the Sons of Han." They occupied the stage, and the eyes of the rest of China were upon

* So serious had these atrocities become that on the 16th of November the Powers took the grave step of protesting. The protest was not confined to the Imperialists, but also unsparingly condemned the anti-Manchu outrages which had occurred in many parts of the country.

them. Even if they were secretly desirous of peace, they had to show that the movement still retained its spirit and that terms could not yet be dictated. And so they did not allow the Imperialists to rest.

Their first offensive operation after the destruction of Hankow occurred on the early morning of the 4th of November, when, taking advantage of the withdrawal of a portion of the Imperialist troops across the river to silence the Chingshan forts, the revolutionaries made a night attack on Kilometre Ten. As far as could be discovered, some sharp fighting ensued, but the revolutionaries were compelled to retire. This, however, was only the prelude to a series of night attacks on the Imperialist position. On the 6th a large body of revolutionist troops crossed the Han and attacked the Imperialists at Ta Chih Men. The Imperialists made a counter-move, endeavouring to cross the Han higher up stream, opposite Hei Shan, and attack Hanyang, but the fire of the big guns at Hanyang rendered this impossible, and the idea had to be abandoned. Next night the revolutionaries were again active, and so it went on, neither side advancing their cause, the one because of the impotence of untrained men to stand against disciplined troops, the other because the word had not yet gone forth for a further decisive blow to be struck. But in the meantime these fights, which must be passed by almost unrecorded, levied a heavy toll in dead and wounded. The courage of the revolutionaries often made of skirmishes fierce engagements, and the losses, especially on the revolutionary side, were far from inconsiderable.

This somewhat negative phase of the operations may be said to have come to an end on the evening of Sunday, the 12th. While foreign worshippers were on their way to the various Christian churches the first shell came screeching from Hanyang, and that night the special prayer for China in her sore affliction was offered up in an atmosphere reverberating with the sounds of scientific modern warfare. All night and all next day the fight was waged, the revolutionaries occupying the water-tower and parts of the undestroyed portion of Hankow, and taking up a strong position on the left bank of the Han, despite the attempts of the Imperialists to dislodge them.

The revolutionary success was inspired by two new elements in the situation. In the first place, they had been reinforced by trained troops from Hunan, estimated at not less than 10,000 men; secondly, it was known that Admiral Sah's fleet was about to run up the revolutionary flag. News of the happening of the latter event, indeed, actually reached Wuchang during the two days' fight. As for the Admiral himself, he had seen fit to quit the stage suddenly one night at Kiukiang, and though his exit was not over-dignified, he carried with him the goodwill of his officers and men. He would have been welcomed on the revolutionary side. By a curious irony he had been in command of the ship which had been joined more than twenty years before by the now famous General Li Yuan Hung, as a young engineer officer fresh from the Pei Yang School. The revolutionary leader, it was reported, had more than once addressed to him letters urging his conversion, but the Admiral professed scruples which, as subsequent events seemed to show, excited revolutionary respect. A few days after his retirement he was asked what was his present position, to which he is said to have replied, "I am not on either side. I held command of the navy under the Throne, and did my part to uphold it, and the Throne has only itself to blame for the situation as it is now. The soldiers sent down to Hankow were well drilled and well equipped, and made a splendid fighting machine. They would have soon put down the uprising if they had been allowed to, but the Throne shifted its policy at the most critical times."

The criticism, as our narrative of events has shown, from a military point of view, was not an unsound one, but it hardly came with a good grace from Admiral Sir Chen Ping Sah.* With the exception of one or two rare occasions his fleet had rendered but indifferent assistance, and he had lost many excellent opportunities of taking effective action. It early appeared, however, that in many essential points the equipment of the ships was deficient, and it is probable that many of the men from the outset were of dubious loyalty. The extraordinary line taken by the fleet and its general incompetence will perhaps be

* Admiral Sah was created K.C.M.G. by King Edward.

explained some day, but from appearances it seemed that the unexpected call showed that the slackness and inefficiency which was formerly the characteristic of the Chinese armed forces in times of peace had not yet been eradicated from the navy. When Admiral Sah speaks we shall perhaps know better where to lay the blame, and it may be that he should be exonerated. But in the meantime a conclusion asserts itself that forces British people to regret that the environment of his more mature years apparently caused him to forget the essential lessons of his youthful training in the Royal Navy. It cannot be disguised that much was expected from Admiral Sah, and the disappointment was correspondingly great.

To return, however, from a necessary if not altogether agreeable digression, the further prosecution of the victorious revolutionary advance was delayed for some days owing to heavy rains, which impeded the infantry. The time had been utilised, however, with preparations for a considerable concerted movement, which General Li was credibly reported to have intended should eventuate in a Sedan. The idea was to dispatch a substantial force up the Han for the purpose of making a big detour under cover of Chang Chih Tung's dam* and delivering a flank attack. In the meantime a force was to be pushed across the river in the neighbourhood of Seven Mile Creek and deliver a rear attack, while a frontal attack would be made from the positions already taken up on the left bank of the Han under cover of the Hanyang guns.

Things looked none too well for the soldiers who were fighting for the established order. With their ranks beginning to be sadly depleted by desertion, wounds, and death, faced by great numbers of eager fighting men, with the fleet against them, and their communications threatened, it almost looked as though the tale of Imperialist successes had been told, as though General Li's reported ambition, in part at least, might be realised.

Yet such are the vicissitudes of war that ten days only were destined to elapse before these same troops, now so

* *Vide* Map of the "Three Cities." The dam was designed as a protection against floods. It had been constructed by the Viceroy Chang Chih Tung.

sorely threatened, would be reinforced and achieve the most brilliant exploit of the whole campaign. The considerations which since the destruction of Hankow had exercised a restraining influence over the soldiers from the North no longer applied. The time had arrived for prosecuting operations with renewed rigour. The order had at last gone forth to effect the capture of Hanyang.

The effect on the Imperialists was very marked. If they had fought well before, with a great objective before them their spirit was redoubled, and it made itself felt in meeting the attack projected by General Li, which badly failed.

The causes of failure were twofold. In the first place, the attacks did not synchronise, and secondly, they were not delivered in sufficient force, a factor which makes it difficult to explain the revolutionary tactics at this time. While, as has been seen, the Imperialist force at the front was far from formidable, the revolutionaries, on the other hand, under the redoubtable Huang Hsing, were massed at Hanyang in great numbers. Apart from the recruits they had had since the 11th a fine fighting force of trained men, and it is scarcely open to doubt that a determined and well worked out plan of assault on the Imperialist position, following the lines which have been indicated, must have resulted in the cutting of their communications and the ultimate defeat of the remnant of the army at the front. The advantages of such an achievement from the revolutionary standpoint can scarcely be overestimated. Their position as an effective party would have been greatly enhanced, while the difficulty of taking Hanyang must have been redoubled if it had not been indefinitely postponed. Thus, from a political as from a military standpoint, it must be admitted that the revolutionary leaders once again lost a fine opportunity in the period between the arrival of reinforcements from Hunan on the 11th of November and the further dispatch of Imperialist troops to the front at Hankow. The pacific policy of Yuan Shih K'ai had made for weakness, and there was a period of several days before this weakness was repaired. The revolutionaries might have struck a serious blow to the Imperialist cause, which at this juncture, when the outcome could still not be foreseen, would have been of inestimable value. As things fell

out, the opportunity was allowed to slip, not because it was not perceived, but because the measures concerted to take advantage of it were inadequate and ineffective.

General Li's final dispositions were made on the 16th, and daylight on the 17th saw the revolutionary forces in a strong position above the dam, the Han having been crossed, by means of a rapidly constructed pontoon bridge, in the neighbourhood of Griffith John College during the night. The same time also found the Imperialists alert and busily occupied preparing for operations.

The Imperial activity was primarily the prelude to resisting the projected revolutionary attack, of the details of which they appeared to be very fully aware. But it also represented the first step in the move on Hanyang. Had the Imperialist force at Ta Chih Men and Kilometre Ten not yet received their orders to prepare to play their part in the assault on this revolutionary stronghold, it is possible that they would not have met the revolutionary attack on this occasion by the method of counter-move which they adopted. Their numbers now in the field at Hankow were indeed insufficient to justify the undertaking of any far-reaching manœuvre. The aggressive tactics of the enemy, however, left them no alternative. It was an essential part of the Imperialist plans to prevent the revolutionaries establishing themselves too strongly on the west bank of the Han, especially at the strategic point where it met the big dam. It was also desirable to distract their attention from Imperialist operations in other directions. Thus it came about that the revolutionaries found themselves faced by a force with a game of their own to play instead of by an enemy discouraged by the indeterminate nature of their future. In other words, General Li's project for a Sedan had been devised too late.

But before attempting any description of the operations in which it resulted on the 17th and 18th of November, it will be of advantage to indicate the plan of campaign upon which the Imperialist leaders had now decided. The task which lay before them was the assault and capture of Hanyang. It was a task of some magnitude. The position of Hanyang, strategically, is a strong one. Situated in the angle formed by the junction of the Han with the Yangtze,

and strongly fortified, attack on the two river protected sides, especially without the co-operation of a fleet, is a difficult and perilous, if not impossible, undertaking. Nor are the approaches on the land side much easier. The city itself is built under the protection of a considerable eminence. Outside its walls on the north side is Tortoise Hill, the twin to Serpent Hill in Wuchang, the guardians of the middle Yangtze. Tortoise Hill was strongly fortified, while beyond it, further away up and along the Han, rise successively three low ranges of hills, the most distant the Hei Shan, or Black Mountain, like a grim sentinel barring the approach from the west. All these hills had been put into a position of strong defence.

The surrounding country rapidly falls away into plain, much of it being below flood level and permanently inundated.

The result is that there are only two possible lines of approach on the land side, the one along a narrow causeway following the Han, which is commanded by the hills which have been described, and a similar line of approach from the south along the Yangtze, this latter, however, involving a great and difficult detour, and susceptible of being equally well commanded.

The Imperialist plan for taking this formidable position was to make a wide flanking movement from Hsiaokan through a place called Tsaitien, about thirteen miles up the Han. At that point it was designed that this column should cross the river and work their way down the right bank to Hanyang. In the meantime the Imperialist troops at Hankow, strongly reinforced, would deliver an attack from the west bank, and when the time came endeavour to bridge the Han, and in conjunction with their friends on the other side of the stream finally carry the last position by direct assault.

In these circumstances it will be seen how necessary it was that the Imperialist forces should command both banks of the Han. It was essential that the two bodies should keep in touch, and the interposition of a hostile force of any real strength must seriously hamper, if it did not defeat, the movement. The angles made by the dam and the Han strongly occupied by the revolutionaries must indeed have involved the preliminary operation of the dislodgment of the

force of occupation, hence the urgent necessity of seizing the earliest opportunity of disputing their possession. It was scarcely less desirable to hold the attention of the revolutionary forces at Hanyang while the crossing higher up was being effected.

The movement to secure these ends was designed and carried out with the precision which had already earned the Imperialists the high opinion of all competent critics. It was described as well as circumstances permitted by the correspondent of the *Hankow Daily News*, from whose account the following few details have been mainly drawn.* The opportunities, however, for securing accurate detailed information were never very considerable, and in justice to observers on the spot, mention may perhaps be made with advantage at this point of the difficulties under which they laboured. No correspondents seem to have been allowed with either force, and during much of the period of the operations about Hankow, foreigners were confined by Consular order to the foreign Concessions. Fortunately many of the high buildings commanded a good view of the surrounding country, and with the aid of good glasses it was possible to follow and appreciate the meaning of a good deal that occurred. But beyond that, accounts written on the field had frequently to be based largely on conjecture, and in consequence were either of doubtful accuracy or meagre.

From the point of view of a close narrative of stirring events this necessarily makes for disappointment to reader and writer alike. But the truth must be told, though it may be admitted that as a matter of military history the loss is probably not material. Many gallant deeds, let it be said at once, were done on either side, while there were also perpetrated many cruel and barbarous things. If one fails to record them it is because a writer can but do his best with what appears to be the reliable material to hand, tracing with precision at least the broad lines of strategy and filling in the detailed movements when the opportunity occurs.

* I also wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to the same source for several of the details of the four days' fighting during the assault on Hanyang, and for an account of a small naval demonstration on the 19th of November.

The operations on the 17th and 18th could be followed from the foreign Concessions, where the alert patrols observed at daylight on the 17th that scouts had been thrown out on the Imperialist side and were working their way across the plain. By nine o'clock a considerable Imperialist force was advancing, under cover of the big guns at the Racecourse, Coffin Hill, and the Sing Seng Road.

The Imperialist advance either caused the revolutionaries to change their plans or anticipated them. From intending attackers they became defenders, occupying a position around the dam from below the waterworks to a point in the distance. On this position the Imperial infantry steadily advanced, some of their guns engaging the artillery at Hanyang and others covering the advance by pouring a rain of shrapnel in the direction of the Griffith John College. A couple of villages near here were shortly burning, and from their direction came an incessant and appalling rifle-fire from the revolutionary infantry, lined in semicircular formation close to the dam.

In the meantime a determined battle was proceeding on the plain, and the noise of both gun and rifle-fire grew louder and louder as the morning passed into afternoon. From the direction of Hankow city also came the sound of rapid rifle-firing, and soon bullets came flying over the Concession and the bund.

The battle-ground itself was too far afield for events to be followed with precision, but from noon onwards the Imperial wounded were being carried back by their brothers-in-arms to the railway line at Ta Chih Men, the large number showing that heavy fighting was in progress.

The Imperialist advance, however, continued, and their smaller field-pieces were pushed steadily forward in a line extending from the neighbourhood of the Chinese Racecourse well out on to the plain. The big guns nearer to the Concession boomed continuously, and under cover of these the infantry could be seen deploying along the narrow roads which intersect the swampy land lying between the Sing Seng Road extension and the dam.

Steadily forward the line pushed, and at 1 p.m. the Imperial force, numbering some fifteen hundred, were pouring a steady fire into the revolutionaries at the dam.

By 2 p.m. this position had been taken and the defenders were retreating on the Han River.

The dam had been finally carried at the point of the bayonet, and there must have been no mean resistance, for a number of the Imperialist wounded brought in were suffering from bayonet wounds. Of the 1,500 men engaged it was estimated some 400 had been put out of action.

The loss of the revolutionary force it was impossible to ascertain, but it could scarcely have been so considerable.

Shortly after 5 p.m. steam launches conveying ironclad lighters full of troops left the Wuchang shore and steamed over towards Hanyang. On nearing the shore they made a dash for the Han River, and succeeded in effecting a passage up this waterway despite an enormous hail of bullets, which made a thunderous noise against the iron sides of the lighters. These got through safely, however, and proceeded up the river, whether to reinforce their friends at the dam or to dispute the Imperial passage of the Han at Tsaitien could not then be seen, but the former at this stage seemed the more likely, and as events proved was the explanation. Counter-moves had never been a strong point with the revolutionary officers. It is also improbable that they had news of the Imperialist designs, the secret of which had doubtless been confined to the necessary few. Even if they had, it is reasonable to suppose from their previous tactics that they would prefer to strengthen the position at the dam, which was really a very strong strategic point, properly utilised, rather than to anticipate the Imperialist movement higher up the stream.

The situation at the end of the day was as nearly as can be ascertained as follows: The Imperialists had dislodged the revolutionaries from their position near the dam and forced them back towards the river's edge at the back of the Griffith John College. But the light bridge which had been previously constructed by the revolutionaries behind the waterworks between the dam and the river was still strongly held by them, being covered by a battery on the Hei Shan immediately behind. The Imperialists, on the other hand, owing to lack of numbers, were unable to hold the position they had won, and were forced to fall back to a point well behind the dam on the foreign Concessions side.

Early on the 18th the fight at the dam was renewed, a considerable revolutionary force being sent over from the far side of the Han, and the old positions partially re-occupied. Thus, as had happened before, not, though, for such legitimate reasons, the Imperialists had their previous day's work to do over again. The battlefield had changed position slightly, the revolutionaries also attacking from higher up the Han. To meet this attack the Imperialist forces extended their line to a point well to the west of the Griffith John College, supported by small field-guns, while the big guns from the Sing Seng Road and Golf-course dealt out shrapnel liberally over the country lying beyond the dam and between it and the Han River. Throughout the day the opposing infantry lines kept up an incessant rifle-fire, but no close range work was apparently indulged in, and both sides were so well protected that the total casualties are said to have numbered less than three hundred, the revolutionaries bearing two-thirds of the losses.

Nothing to change the situation was effected, and though during the night the other part of General Li's plan, the attack from the Seven Mile Creek, was delivered, it was easily repulsed.

The same relative positions were maintained during the following day, neither side making any particular progress. The Imperialist object, however, was so far achieved. They had held in check a considerable force of revolutionaries while the main Imperial body from Hsiaokan was effecting a crossing a few miles higher up, the afternoon of Sunday, the 19th, seeing the commencement of their occupation of Tsaitien.

In the meantime the loyalists at the base at Kilometre Ten had not been idle in other directions. Preparations were busily going forward all the time for the bridging of the Han, and all the indications went to show an early assault in contemplation.

While matters were thus progressing by land, there had been some amount of ill-directed revolutionist energy by river. The naval base, since the conversion of the fleet, had been at Yanglo, a few miles below Hankow, and on the 19th there was some activity in the neighbourhood of Seven Mile Creek in the earlier part of the day, while the

afternoon was characterised by what appeared to be an entirely unnecessary manœuvre on the part of the fleet, which was chiefly remarkable for the cool and courageous way in which the vessels concerned, flying the revolutionary flag, acted in circumstances of grave difficulty and danger.

"During the morning two of the cruisers could be made out through the haze steaming up from Yanglo. At about 11.30 a.m., when still some miles distant from Hankow, they opened fire on the loyalist positions near the Seven Mile Creek, and for three-quarters of an hour kept up a continual bombardment. They then steamed down river, where they were lost sight of. Soon after 2 p.m. they reappeared, and continued their bombardment with fresh vigour, maintaining their fire for about the same period as their former effort, and at its conclusion repeating the same performance of retiring. This was the sort of warfare in which the ships indulged while fighting on the loyalist side, and therefore no one was prepared for the dramatic spectacle which a cruiser and a torpedo-boat presented to the Hankow public between 5 and 6 p.m. Shortly before the former hour, the cruiser *Haiyung* was seen steaming up stream, and developments were expected. Nothing occurred for the moment, however, the vessel, strangely enough, being allowed to steam past the batteries at Kilometre Ten without a shot being fired. The Imperialist gunners, as it afterwards transpired, had not been able to make out the flag, and had taken her for a foreign vessel. A torpedo-boat, which followed soon after, had to pay for the mistake, however, instead of her large consort, for the guns soon began to search the waters near her. Along the Wuchang bund she crept, while shot after shot struck the water around, the revolutionary batteries at Chingshan trying to cover her advance by pouring in a tremendous fire on Kilometre Ten. On came the torpedo-boat, belching flames from her funnels, and looking like gaining a scathless escape from the foolish gauntlet she had run. A shot, however, found her out, and evidently created damage to the boiler's steam pipes, for soon steam was escaping from her in huge clouds.

"Notwithstanding this she reached the jetty opposite the

cloth factory at Wuchang, and men could be seen pouring water from buckets into the engine-room, from which clouds of smoke were now pouring. Attention from this lame duck was soon drawn by the manœuvres of the cruiser.

"After steaming up above Wuchang she turned and steamed at full speed past the Concessions, and opened fire on Kilometre Ten. When nearing this point she slowed down a little, firing twelve rounds before ever a shot from the shore touched her. Then it was by no means a vital blow she received, and the combat continued for some while before four more shots found her in rapid succession, all, as far as could be seen, falling amidships. Nothing daunted, she stuck to her guns, and though columns of smoke were seen issuing from her hull, she continued firing as she steamed at full speed down river.

"Both incidents," concluded the account from which the foregoing is taken, "were instances of great pluck, but were exceeding the duties of the vessels. The torpedo-boat, which stood not one chance in a hundred against the loyalist batteries, could have come up after dark unscathed, while the cruiser would have been far better employed shelling the loyalist position from further down river. To run the gauntlet of the battery was magnificent, but it wasn't war."

This little demonstration was the prelude to two days of peace in the neighbourhood of Hankow. It was explainable from the Imperialist standpoint by various facts. At Kilometre Ten and the position out on the plain they were waiting for reinforcements, which had already been massed at Niehkow, and to give time for the passage of the Han by the whole body of troops from Hsiaokan to be accomplished. In the meantime, amongst other preparations had been the construction of a light railway across the plain, which would serve with rapidity the requirements of their lines at the most distant points.

The apparent inactivity on the part of the revolutionaries was due to the same facts, if not the same causes. The approach of the force from the west along the right bank of the Han had to be resisted, and a substantial body of troops had now been sent forward for that purpose. As usual,

however, they were just too late. The Imperialists, as has been recorded, had commenced their crossing at Tsaitien on the afternoon of the 19th. The whole force was safely across, and Tsaitien, a busy market town, was strongly occupied by the morning of the 20th. By the morning of the 21st they were ready to commence to move, if necessary, on Hanyang.

One more day, however, was taken for resting the troops and completing the final preparations before embarking on their tremendous task.

In the meantime the revolutionaries had taken up a position on the last hill of the series of small ranges that culminate in the Tortoise Hill at Hanyang. Their right flank was protected by the Han. Their left rested on the Ma Chia lake. In front of them was a swift-flowing tributary of the Han,* the whole constituting a position of great natural strength, merely awaiting their occupation. It perhaps explains their failure to resist the earlier crossing.

But however this may be, the time for regrets, if such were felt, was passed. Whether chosen rightly or wrongly, deliberately or the reverse, the scene of the first fight was now clearly determined, and daylight on the 22nd of November saw the commencement of that terrific struggle which was to result in the fall of the revolutionary citadel. The honour of commencing operations rested with the Imperialist force from Hsiaokan, which made a gallant attack upon the extreme western revolutionary position, that redoubtable eminence, so strongly situated, which has just been described. Unfortunately the details of such a fight are not of the kind which can be adequately told, even if the Chinese accounts hitherto available, and there have been none other, were not too contradictory to form a reliable guide. It can perhaps rather be imagined. On the one hand the Imperialists had to gain that eminence. The revolutionaries, on the other hand, deriving an added courage and strength from the inspiration of their cause, were determined to die before they would yield. On each side was fine artillery, machine guns, and every species of modern arm.

* The San Yen Ch'iao, the "Three-eyed bridge" over this stream, was also strongly held by revolutionaries.

Once again, however, as far as it has been able to be established, the generalship of the Imperialists was destined to decide the issue in their favour. As reinforcements had come into Kilometre Ten, so had the distant position in the plain been strengthened, with the result that at the critical moment great assistance could be rendered to the gallant force engaged in the frontal attack. It was long, however, before the Imperialists were able to make any real impression upon the position, and it was not until noon next day, and only at a terrible price in killed and wounded, that this first set of hills was occupied.

In the meantime a scarcely less spirited attack on Hanyang had been made from the base at Kilometre Ten, an attempt being made under cover of a tremendous bombardment to storm Hanyang. The direct assault from the Hankow side, however, was repulsed. Despite a display of the greatest gallantry the crossing of the river under the heavy rifle-fire of the thousands who defended the city was too stupendous a task at this early stage. The Imperialists, however, seemed all the time to be gathering fresh courage from each fresh repulse, while the stubbornness of the revolutionary defence appeared to increase before the wonderful determination of those who were their brothers and yet their foes. With scarcely a pause the fight raged on through every part of the field during the 23rd, both the day and night, and the day of the 24th. To the accompaniments of the revolutionary fire at Wuchang and Hanyang, the guns of the fleet which chose the occasion to make an attack on the Imperialist position at Niehkow, the Chingshan guns which rained on Kilometre Ten, and the Imperialist guns at Sing Seng Road and Coffin Hill, the infantry fought on. The front of the battle during these days must have ranged well over five miles, and all this distance along the Han fighting went on, as it seemed, without a moment's cessation, the nature of the fighting levying a terrible toll in dead and wounded.

The night of the 24th, however, brought a temporary respite, and may be said to have marked the end of the first stage in the struggle. The Imperialists had made substantial progress. In face of the fiercest opposition the force in the neighbourhood of the dam, and beyond, had

bridged the Han in two places, while a third bridge was nearing completion. Over the first two a large force had already passed, and early on the 23rd an entire brigade had gone to reinforce the troops attacking the Hanyang range. All the small hills to the west of the Hei Shan were in the hands of the Imperialists, and the redoubtable Hei Shan itself they had already commenced to shell.

During the 25th, as if by common consent, there came something of a lull in the Hanyang side of the field. The revolutionaries, however, were active elsewhere. Early in the morning a force which had landed at Yanglo advanced towards the Imperialist position at Niehkow. Two cruisers supported the movement by heavy fire from their big guns at the Niehkow Hill, but apparently they failed to find the range. The Imperialist guns, on the other hand, kept up an incessant shrapnel fire at the advancing infantry, who were finally forced back toward the river bank, not far from the mouth of the third creek. At the same time a train from Niehkow steamed down the line, and both the cruisers and revolutionary infantry, though at long range, turned their attention to this. Shells and bullets fell around, but all in the wake of the train, which ran through to Kilometre Ten apparently without being touched.

Sunday morning, the 26th, saw the more serious business of the Hanyang fight resumed, both forces coming back to the combat with renewed vigour. From far up the Han early came the sound of heavy firing. The Imperialists were throwing their whole strength against Hei Shan. The revolutionaries were defending strongly, but in the end the more accurate fire of the Imperialists caused them to suffer considerably. This demoralised them to such an extent that they commenced to retreat in disorder. Reinforcements and ammunition came up during the day, however, and nightfall saw it still uncaptured, though the Imperialist position had been materially improved, and Hei Shan was now far more seriously threatened. But once again it was at a terribly heavy cost, and the question, it was said, began to suggest itself whether it was not too heavy. Even with Hei Shan captured there still remained Tortoise Hill, and the defences of the city that must be approached along that terrible narrow causeway.

The result of the fighting up to this point went to show that the great and indomitable courage of the Imperialists, combined with their real fighting skill, must, if continued to be applied, bring them finally into Hanyang. Thus much may be said without any disparagement of the men who were so bravely defending the series of hill positions. Though the revolutionary forces were now largely composed of trained soldiers, their training was inferior to that of the men from the North, whose equipment, especially in the matter of artillery, was more effective. The only question that was likely to arise was whether the price that it seemed would have to be paid before the end was reached would not prove too great. It has even been said that the Imperialist commander, General Feng Kuo Chang, was already considering the advisability of modifying his plans. But if this was the case there was certainly no evidence of it; on the contrary, there was every indication of a firm intention on the part of the Imperialists to complete the task which they had undertaken.

It was not destined, however, that these brave troops should go through the ordeal which threatened. Fortunately, in the interests of humanity, dissensions broke out at this stage amongst the defenders of Hanyang. The principal troops concerned on the revolutionary side were men of Hupei and Hunan. Since the latter had arrived on the scene the Hupei soldiers, on whom had hitherto fallen the brunt of the fighting, resigned the place of honour in favour of the Hunanese. Thus it came about that Hunan men were defending the outlying positions, while the garrison was composed of soldiers of Hupei. As the former were gradually forced in upon the base, they complained of being shot from the rear, and charged the Hupei men with deliberately shooting them down to prevent their falling back. There seems to be no doubt that some casualties were caused in this way, and of them many were probably due to careless firing as the various positions became more confined. Whether the more serious charge could be substantiated is not clear. Nor is it of great importance. The fact remains that the Hunanese believed it, and becoming demoralised by the persistence and accuracy of the Imperialist attack, they refused to continue

the fight, retiring during the night of the 26th to Wuchang.

Thus it came about that on the 27th Hanyang quickly fell into Imperialist hands. Once more the Dragon flag flew from Tortoise Hill, while its erstwhile defenders and the luckless populace were in full flight. The victors, it has unfortunately to be recorded, then addressed themselves to the task of their revenge. Guns and a merciless rifle-fire were turned on every fugitive within reach, irrespective of their calling, sex, or age. Thus by the irony of fate the ensign of the unfortunate Manchu House was again made, by the whim of the rough soldiers, to be the emblem of cruelty and murder, while in a day the glory with which the Imperialist troops had covered themselves was sadly tarnished. Indeed, the operations in the neighbourhood of Hankow, culminating in the fall of Hanyang, if they had shown the strong points of the Chinese modern soldier, had also afforded a painful demonstration of his weaker side. On the one hand, both Imperialists and revolutionaries proved themselves possessed of a high degree of courage, bearing wounds with a fortitude which had excited admiration and respect. But from the military point of view the revolutionaries were always handicapped, and so far as the lessons of the campaign are concerned the Imperialist side may be more advantageously regarded. On the Imperialist side every arm of the service had distinguished itself. The generalship had been of a high order. The men had been well led. Sappers had constructed bridges under conditions of grave difficulty and danger. Gunners in moments of the greatest excitement had coolly used their range-finders and Zeiss glasses, and if their shooting had been unequal, none was really bad, and some would have been no discredit to the finest European artillerymen. The supply and transport had been effective, telegraphists had maintained their communications, and the Red Cross organisation had worked courageously and well. Formidable positions had been carried, and a front maintained in exposed positions under murderous fire which would not have disgraced veterans. In a word, the men from the North had shown themselves soldiers, in the sense of fighting machines, of a high order. But there the praise must end. War is a rough business,

arousing cruel passions, but even so, and after making every allowance, the admission forces itself that the Chinese soldier showed himself lacking in the moral sense which goes with true humanitarian instincts and the higher forms of civilisation. He has learned the mechanical side of his profession, but still has to learn the higher side which only asks a fair fight and honours a vanquished enemy. Some day he will learn that lesson too, and in the meantime this aspect of events in the neighbourhood of the "Three Cities" affords one of the indications of the present moral fibre of a section of the lower orders.


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CHAPTER XXVI

THE STRUGGLE FOR NANKING

WITH the capture of Hanyang, Wuchang threatened, and Nanking apparently still strongly held by the Imperialists, the tide seemed to make strongly in the direction of the conclusion of peace. The evidences favoured a peace on the lines of a limited monarchy, so strongly advocated by Yuan Shih K'ai. The revolutionary troops at Wuchang were frankly discouraged. Their leader, General Li Yuan Hung, and even the redoubtable Huang Hsing, who had conducted the defence of Hanyang, were forced to admit the inability of the forces at their disposal to cope with the trained soldiers of the Northern section of the Model Army. The Imperialists held the country north of the great river. The people of the recalcitrant Province of Shantung, after less than three weeks enjoyment of the stolen fruits of independence, had begun to show signs of being persuaded back to their former allegiance.* The approaches to Peking on every side were still in the Imperialist hands. The two great railways from the Yangtze northward were commanded, the central trunk by Baron Feng Kuo Chang, the victor of Hanyang, while the Imperialist forces at Nanking held the Pukou terminus of the Tientsin-Pukou railway. Similarly, the Peking-Mukden line was in no danger of passing beyond the Central Government's control.

But the hopes that such a situation had generated were not destined to realisation. As it had been produced by

* Shantung had begun to suffer from economic pressure. Never self-supporting, with taxation suspended the new administration soon found itself without the means of government. Some apprehension also began to be felt as to the possible German attitude. In the circumstances the leaders determined to seek pardon, and at the beginning of December were taken back into the fold.

a more or less sudden combination of circumstances, so the forces which went to make it up were suddenly distributed. On the 2nd of December Nanking fell into revolutionary hands. The balance was restored, and the parties were once more in a position to talk on almost level terms.

Of all the events in the course of the campaign none had so great a moral effect as the fall of Nanking. To the children of Han, that is to say to the Chinese of the eighteen provinces of China Proper, it is a city of sentimental associations. As its name implies, it is the Southern capital as opposed to Peking, which means the capital of the North. It was here that the first Emperor of the Mings, the last purely Chinese dynasty, had set up his court after the expulsion of the Mongols. It is true that a few years later the requirements of government rendered expedient a return to Peking, yet in purely Chinese eyes, at least in the South, Nanking still stands as something of a symbol of Chinese freedom from a foreign yoke. It is no cosmopolis. At least it is a Chinese city in its foundation and its history. At the moment it had taken upon itself a new significance. For some three weeks now it had been the last of the considerable cities south of the Yangtze to fly the Dragon flag. Even in great crises sentiment and superstition play great parts. In many minds its fate had come to be regarded as the determining factor in the issue. Thus history repeats itself. Nanking was captured and made their capital by the leaders of the Taiping rebellion in the middle of the last century. Then, as now, its possession had a symbolic significance, and with its recovery by the Imperialists in 1864 the rebellion was crushed.

Nanking lies on the south bank of the Yangtze, some two hundred miles above Shanghai. The original founders of the city, several centuries before the present era, set it some distance back from the river bank. But as time went on and the city grew, the suburbs to the north were taken in, with the result that at its most northerly point it approached the Yangtze. Unlike most Chinese cities, it is of irregular shape and of unusually large extent, its great walls of varying height, and in many places of a thickness of forty feet, having a length of twenty-two miles.

Nanking is finely situated, and it is not difficult to imagine of it an historic past. But it has long been shorn of its ancient glory. More than once an Imperial capital, for five hundred years it has now had to be content to be only a provincial city. And Fate has dealt it still harder blows. In the bitter struggle that raged about it during the Taiping rebellion it became desolated. Its populous streets were made a wilderness, its few architectural beauties and its one great glory, the wonderful porcelain pagoda of nine stories, studded with precious stones and erected at fabulous cost in the fifteenth century to commemorate the breaking of the Mongol sway, destroyed. From these ravages the city has been making a slow and painful recovery for fifty years, and with the coming of the Shanghai-Nanking railway, and the connections with the North, a new and more prosperous era in a modernised China has been foretold for this historic link with the distant past.

In olden times Nanking must have been a city of sure defence. Under modern conditions it could be made a place of great military strength. It is true that to the west runs the great river, which would lay it open to naval attack. But on the remaining sides rise hills which dominate the surrounding country, command the water approaches, and shelter the city lying at their feet. Of these hills the most famous is Purple Mountain, rising directly behind the city, with a height of something under a thousand feet, forming, it is said, the key to Nanking. It was here that some of the heaviest fighting took place. Tiger Hill, the first position to be occupied by the revolutionary forces, also lies outside the city in the direction of Chinkiang, while Lion Hill lies in the northern angle of Nanking, not far removed from the river.

Within a comparatively brief time of the outbreak at Wuchang it became evident that trouble was brewing at Nanking. At a very early stage the people commenced to remove themselves and their belongings from the city, the families of some of the highest officials being amongst the earliest refugees. Rumour was also busy, but it was some time before any further manifestations took place. When these did occur, they were not easy to follow, which makes it difficult to piece together a connected story. A

careful study and comparison of the available material, however, leads to certain conclusions which, it is believed, may be safely accepted.

As usual, everything depended on the attitude of the troops, of which there was gathered in Nanking a collection of diverse training and conflicting aspirations. In the first place, there were two infantry regiments of modern troops, comprising rather more than 3,000 men. There were also 600 cavalry, 900 artillerymen, 500 engineers, and a commissariat corps about 500 strong, all also of the Model Army, making a total with the infantry of about 5,500, under the command of General Hsü Shao Cheng. Of old-style troops there were fourteen "yings," or battalions most of them below their full strength of 500, but making a total of between 5,000 and 6,000 men, under General Chang Hsün. The garrisons of the various forts represented some 400 further odd men of indeterminate tendencies, while finally there were about 2,000 Manchu troops, under the Tartar-General Tieh Liang.*

The issue which lay between these forces threatened to produce serious consequences. It was not to be supposed that the modern-drilled troops had failed to be affected by the policy which had been pursued for years by the emissaries of the T'ung Meng Hui, and it could be presumed almost as a matter of course that they were in part at any rate disloyal. Like the troops elsewhere, doubtless many of their officers were secretly sworn to the cause, while the soldiers themselves were not unaffected by the new doctrines. The old-time troops, on the other hand, a gradually disappearing element under the system of disbandment which had been adopted on the formation of the Model Army, were of more conservative tendencies, as far as men of that type and calibre could be said to have tendencies beyond the gratification from day to day of their natural instincts. Generally speaking, they had been

* The figures are taken from a dispatch from Mr. F. E. Wilkinson (since created C.M.G.), H.M. Consul at Nanking, to Sir John Jordan, H.M. Minister, White Book, China, No. 1 of 1912, at p. 54. I may add that this chapter had been written before the publication of the White Book, but Mr. Wilkinson's valuable dispatches have enabled more correct information on certain points to be included.

neglected by the revolutionary organisations charged with the dissemination of the gospel of political freedom, who found it more profitable to concentrate their attention on the modernised arm of the service. The sentiments of the soldiers at the forts could not be so easily gauged, but as regards the fourth element in the situation there was no doubt. There was no room for more than one sentiment amongst the members of the small Manchu garrison. They were an integral part of the Imperial regime, and they had no alternative but to stand by the old order.

In the face of developments at Wuchang and of the complications which it seemed must inevitably ensue from the military situation at Nanking, the Viceroy took the precaution of having the bolts removed from the rifles of the modern-drilled troops, who presented the principal danger, at the same time depriving them of their ammunition. An uneventful week followed, when the disarmed troops, beginning to be alarmed for their own safety, demanded to be provided with the means of defending themselves in the case of eventualities. Their fear was mainly of Manchu reprisals, and in less degree of an onslaught by the troops of Chang Hsün. And their apprehensions were by no means ungrounded, a fact that was admitted by the Viceroy himself, who proposed to relieve them from their precarious position by re-arming a certain proportion. To this course, however, the Tartar-General interposed the strongest objections, and it was with difficulty that the matter was compromised by an arrangement whereby the new troops should withdraw to a camp at Molingkuan, some fifteen miles to the south of the city, where they should be put in a position of sufficient strength for defence purposes.

The withdrawal took place on the 29th of October, but it was evident that the solution was far from being a permanent one. The Viceroy himself, it appears, held the opinion that Nanking could not continue to be held for the Imperialists, and in order to avoid the bloodshed which must ensue, he urged Peking to authorise a compromise amounting in effect to a surrender to the revolutionaries. In this proposal, it was announced on the 6th of November, the Central Government acquiesced. By the same time an understanding had been virtually arrived at between the Viceroy and the representa-

tives of the popular movement for the formation of a provisional government under the headship of Chang Chien,* the President of the Provincial Assembly. For a few hours it looked like plain sailing. Once more, however, Tieh Liang interposed his veto, and refusing to recognise the Decree, which he declared to be a forgery, he announced his intention of fighting for Nanking to the last trench. In the meantime the old-time troops, or rather their leader, General Chang Hsün, who was destined in the days that followed to leap so rapidly to fame, or at least to achieve a remarkable notoriety, had seen in the situation his opportunity. For the moment he held the balance of power.

It is perhaps to place Chang Hsün on too high a plane to describe him as a soldier of fortune. Certainly he lacked the more picturesque and admirable characteristics which tradition associates with the best types of that romantic race. Many close observers, indeed, regarded him as a bombastic and not too courageous sort of hero at best. That he was unscrupulous, with a bias on the sordid side, cannot be denied. On the other hand he played a bold part, and, up to a certain point, adopted a resolute line that seemed to indicate that in more favourable circumstances he might have been capable of higher things.

His career commenced with the French War in 1884, during which, being still in the ranks, he managed to attract the attention of his superior officer. According to one account he secured promotion but neglected his opportunities, with the result that after many vicissitudes, some of which nearly brought his career to a summary conclusion, he found himself at the time of the Boxer troubles living in obscurity in Peking. Following the Court into exile at Hsianfu, he won the goodwill of the old Empress-Dowager, which eventuated in his present command. According to another account he owed most of his success to his wife, who had been one of the favourite ladies-in-waiting to Tzu Hsi.

Be this as it may, however, the situation at Nanking presented a rare chance, and General Chang Hsün is credibly

* Chang Chien has been already referred to as the Minister of Agriculture, Industry, and Commerce in Yuan Shih K'ai's Cabinet formed some ten days later. *Vide* ante, p. 186.

reported to have opened up negotiations with the Viceroy for the purchase of his support to the proposed provisional government. The basis of the negotiations from his side was the payment to himself of eight hundred thousand taels, a sum roughly equivalent to one hundred thousand pounds sterling. The Viceroy, on behalf of the gentry of Nanking, who were in close touch with the advanced revolutionary element, and stood with himself for what amounted to the surrender of Nanking and peace, offered the General just half that sum. This offer, it is said, was indignantly refused, and Chang Hsün ostensibly threw in his lot with the Tartar-General, Tieh Liang. As will be seen, however, he still delayed before finally committing himself.

The failure of the Viceroy's plan brought about the rising which, as in the case of Canton, had been so confidently expected and so long delayed. There were many revolutionary agents in Nanking, and only the Viceroy's intelligent anticipation of the course of events, resulting in the disarmament of the modern troops, and his conciliatory attitude subsequently, had postponed action and produced an impression of apparent indecision. The revolutionary counsels, however, were never less divided. Their hearts were set on Nanking with the unanimity and steadfastness which makes for sacrifice, and the spirit which admits no defeat.

The somewhat indeterminate state of affairs which had now arisen came to an end on the 8th of November, when shortly before daybreak an attack was made on the Viceroy's yamen. It was intended to be in the nature of a surprise attack, but it completely failed. The cause of the failure, so far as it has been possible to pierce the obscurity in which the operations, like most of the revolutionary operations, were veiled, seems to have been twofold: in the first place the revolutionaries were in insufficient force, and secondly, their concerted plan miscarried. Owing to the retirement of the modern troops to Molingkuan it was, of course, impossible to attempt anything like a surprise attack in any considerable numbers. In consequence, it appears to have been arranged that at a preconcerted signal a certain portion of the Viceroy's bodyguard were to turn revolutionary and attack the yamen from within, while a force co-operating outside would endeavour, after attacking the gaol and

releasing the prisoners, to carry the place by assault. By some mischance, however, the signal was mistaken by the soldiers in the yamen, and the change of colour sought to be effected too soon, with the result that the mutinous soldiers were easily suppressed and their friends in the city deprived of their assistance. Nevertheless, some fighting ensued, in which the revolutionaries sustained about a hundred casualties. The next movement took place on the following morning, November 9th, when about 2 a.m., an attack was made on the Yü Hua Tai fort, situated about half a mile outside the south gate of Nanking. This also failed, the revolutionaries being disappointed in their hope that the garrison of the fort would prove disloyal. So strongly grounded, indeed, had been this hope that the attacking force were reported in the first instance to have advanced in the open waving their hands and calling on their brethren within to join them. Only when several of them were shot down did they realise their error and resort to more normal methods of attack. The retirement, however, had to be sounded at dawn, the revolutionary casualties on this occasion being estimated at two hundred killed and wounded.

In the meantime the old-time troops had taken advantage of the confusion resulting from the attack on the Viceroy's yamen on the morning of the 8th to commence to loot, and General Chang Hsün had proclaimed martial law. It does not appear, however, that this step was taken as an anti-revolutionary measure. Rather it was designed to show his command of the situation and as an indication of his value. General Chang Hsün still maintained a neutral attitude. It is true that he beheaded some forty members of his body-guard on suspicion of being revolutionaries, which involved him in serious trouble with the rest. But this was merely a disciplinary measure, and he succeeded in maintaining his authority amongst his men.

The outcome of the first efforts of the revolutionaries to assume control showed that they were faced with a task of considerable magnitude, and served to demonstrate more forcibly the position and influence of General Chang Hsün in the decision of the issue of the struggle for Nanking. The time was thus ripe for the latter to put himself and his troops once more in the market, and it was currently reported



General Chang Hsün, the Defender of Nanking.

that on the occurrence of the outbreak he had again done so, but at the enhanced price of one million four hundred thousand taels, as opposed to the eight lacs of his former more modest demand.

The revolutionaries, however, if defeated were not discouraged. Following the precedent of other places they had elected as their leader General Hsü Shao Cheng, who has been already mentioned as the Divisional Commander of the modern troops at Nanking. The people had been addressed in a Proclamation in which General Hsü had been described, with the title now become famous, as Military Governor or Tu Tu of Nanking under the Chinese Military Republic. The revolutionary leaders had pledged themselves to the task of the capture of Nanking. General Chang Hsün's assistance would doubtless have saved time and trouble and innocent blood. But they were not reduced to the necessity of buying his support, and the reasons which had operated before to limit the amount of the Viceroy's offer, which had only been grudgingly approved by the revolutionaries, now operated to cause the rejection of his demands.

From that moment General Chang Hsün became a staunch adherent to the Manchu cause. He had already declared martial law. Now, taking supreme charge of the city, he virtually made prisoners of the Viceroy and the Tartar-General, and proceeded to institute a hunt for revolutionaries.

The excesses of the days that followed have no doubt been exaggerated. But it was not necessary to resort to exaggeration in order to produce an effect. The search for revolutionaries resolved itself into a hunt for students and queueless men, and for persons showing signs of the white badge of revolt, or anything that by any stretch of imagination might be so considered. On the night of the 8th alone it was said that four hundred suspects were executed, and their heads hung over the doors of their own homes. Still the reign of terror was not overpast. Two days more were destined to elapse before a respite came. By then Chang Hsün had impressed himself sufficiently on the imagination of the city. There no longer remained any room for doubt as to who was master in Nanking.

A comparatively uneventful period now ensued. General

Hsü Shao Cheng had fallen back in the direction of Chinkiang. With his troops still partially disarmed, it had been impossible for him to assist the luckless people within the walls, and he must secure military supplies and reinforcements before he could deliver a general attack. General Chang Hsün, on the other hand, realised that he must now prepare seriously either to withstand a siege or embark on offensive operations. It seemed, indeed, at first, that the latter was his intention, for his boast was that he would reconquer the whole province and restore it to Manchu rule. But, however this might be, as a preliminary measure to whatever might betide, provisions from all quarters were commandeered and other steps taken. By this time the great bulk of the population of Nanking had fled. In order to lessen the demand on food several thousands more were driven from the city.

The monotony of preparation on both sides was broken on the 14th of November by an attempt at mediation by a well-known missionary, Dr. Gilbert Reid, of Shanghai. According to the statement which was subsequently issued to the public Dr. Reid, who acted "with the approval of the Military Commander in Shanghai and of Dr. Wu Tingfang, Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs,* made an effort to secure peace by a conference of two hours with General Chang Hsün. The guest from Shanghai was treated with proper courtesy and was thanked. The proposal made on Dr. Reid's own initiative was one most easy of acceptance, but was rejected. It was, in a word, that General Chang and the other side should grant an armistice of half a month, neither side to change its *status quo* in Nanking or Chinkiang, until the Peking Government, with Yuan Shih K'ai, should have time to come to a decision about the whole country.

"General Chang maintained that he must be loyal to the Emperor. When it was pointed out that by Edict the revolutionists were not to be regarded as enemies but as a party, and that all fighting should cease, he replied that he had not received any such Edict. In suppressing the rebels, he not only would resist them if they attacked Nanking, but he was going to lead his troops to Chinkiang, to

* In the Republican Government recently created in Shanghai.

Soochow, and then to Shanghai, to win back these places to his Emperor and to wipe out all enemies." *

From this position Chang Hsün was not to be moved, and so failed this attempt at peace. With the failure, preparations on both sides were pressed on, promising the spectacle of military operations of unusual magnitude and importance.

The topography of Nanking has already been referred to and its great natural strength described. Mention has also been made of the fact that it was strengthened by forts, and if the great length of the city walls made for weakness, much had to be done before an attacking force could gain a position from which they could take advantage of it. The city and the outlying positions constituting various lines of defence were now occupied by a fairly well-equipped and well-provisioned force, claimed by its commander to amount to 20,000 men, and which could scarcely have been less than 50 to 75 per cent. of that respectable total. The old-time troops which constituted part of that ancient force known as the Yangtze Defence Army had been largely reinforced by battalions called in from other places. Recruits had also been enrolled. In addition, there were the Manchus. Resolute and rough men the former, devoid of sentiment and of fierce nature, they were a formidable band. The latter, when it came to the point, must fight: the die had been doubly cast, first by their own commander, the Tartar-General Tieh Liang, and secondly by General Chang Hsün, and the history of the Revolution taught them that resistance meant fighting for their lives.

The activities of General Chang found their complement in extensive revolutionary preparations. A base had been created at Chinkiang, and thither were dispatched daily from Shanghai and other places men, horses, and supplies. The nucleus of the attacking force were the 33rd and 34th Regiments, which had been compelled to retire from Nanking, together with the detachments from other arms of the service which had accompanied them and had gone to make up the force of modern soldiers stationed at Nanking. They were reinforced by 3,000 troops from Soochow, a battery of artillery, and 400 "dare-to-dies,"

* *North China Daily News*, November 16, 1911.

the determined corps, to which reference has already been made, whose members had sworn to fight to the death for their great cause. The Province of Chekiang also supplied a body of nearly 3,000 men, composed of infantry, cavalry, and artillery. Finally, further up river two additional forces were manœuvring to co-operate.

With these forces, the combined total of which could not have been less than 15,000 men, and was subsequently reinforced, General Hsü Shao Cheng made the following plan of campaign: At the head of rather more than 5,000 troops he himself proposed to move directly on Nanking, presumably first taking the position at Tiger Hill. A second body, about 2,000 strong, was to make a detour and advance on the city through the hills, an operation which, it would appear, must involve an assault on Purple Mountain. A third force of similar strength would proceed by river. Of the forces beyond Nanking, one of approximately 2,000 men was already marching overland from Wuhu, and it was hoped would arrive in time to move on the city from the south. Finally, the other up-river force, consisting of 1,500 infantry, 500 cavalry, 600 artillery, and 48 guns, had by now concentrated at Nganking, and was to be moved down by river.

In the meantime, in response to the concentration of the revolutionary forces, General Chang Hsün had pushed forward the main body of his troops some miles in the direction of Chinkiang, leaving about 3,000 men only to hold the city.

Such in general terms were the dispositions on either side, so far as it has been possible to gather them from Chinese records, comparison of the reports of foreigners at different points, and private sources of information. If they are less precise and complete than one would wish, it must be remembered that there were no special correspondents, no facilities for securing authentic information, and that but little reliance is to be placed on the *ex parte* statements of either side during a period of distorted vision, and in a country where the language of hyperbole and allegory is the language of daily life.

Fortunately an account of the operations which ensued does not present the same difficulty. Regarded from a technical

standpoint they fall into three well-defined phases, and the small details have but little interest or value from either the historical or military point of view. The case would have been otherwise had the defender of Nanking shown better generalship. As things turned out, General Chang Hsün failed in large measure to realise the high hopes Imperialist sympathisers had formed of him.*

The forward movement which now began to be made by the revolutionaries brought the advance posts of the rival forces into touch on the 17th of November. It was not till three days later, however, that anything more considerable than skirmishes took place. By this time the main body of revolutionaries under General Hsü Shao Cheng had reached a place called Lungtan, some twenty miles from Nanking. At this point a position had been taken up by a substantial proportion of the force which had been thrown forward by General Chang. An engagement ensued in which the Imperialists suffered a defeat, losing a few killed and wounded, and several more by surrender.

In the matter of casualties, however, this affair was of trifling importance compared with the lesson which it taught the defenders of Nanking and those who were following events closely. It showed that the revolutionary force, which was largely composed of the modern trained soldier, was the superior on level terms of the old-time warrior of Chang Hsün. It was, indeed, virtually a repetition of the lesson of Hankow, with the difference that now the best trained man was on the revolutionary side.

From this time onward the Imperialists concentrated on the defence of Nanking, and nothing more was heard of General Chang's famous boast to reconquer the province for his Emperor. His object now was rather to hold out as long as possible, and by forcing the Republicans to concentrate on Nanking to cripple their energy and resources. At the same time, whether he felt that the approach of the revolutionaries by river could be made more difficult, or was impressed with the desirability of providing for possible eventualities, the Imperialist position on the other side of

* It is just possible, though improbable, that in the hour of need General Chang's soldiers failed him. Such evidence as exists, however, points the other way.

the Yangtze, at Pukou, was improved. A garrison had already been thrown across from Nanking, and this and the fortifications were now strengthened.

The second stage of the revolutionary advance on Nanking occupied four days, encountering a certain amount of inconvenience, though no serious opposition, from an Imperialist force of about 2,000. This body was under instructions to fight a retiring action, which in the event, however, scarcely rose above the level of skirmishes. During this period the revolutionary force from Wuhu also arrived in the neighbourhood of Nanking, being scarcely more strenuously opposed. On the 24th of November General Hsü Shao Chang captured the important position of Tiger Hill, which it will be remembered commanded the Yangtze and dominated Lion Hill, the fortified éminence at the northern end of Nanking. The same day saw Purple Mountain invested and the full strength of the revolutionary army, supported from the river by the men-of-war,* closing in upon the city.

That an important position such as Tiger Hill was allowed to fall so easily into revolutionary hands reflects seriously, in the absence of evidence of defection amongst his troops, on the generalship of Chang Hsün. But worse was to follow. The third and last phase of the siege had now commenced, taking the form of a series of revolutionary attacks upon the city. These proved abortive. On the night of the 28th a surprise attack was made, and this also failed. Despite the loss of Tiger Hill the Imperialist artillery commanded the situation, and the garrison displayed no sign of weakening. As the days passed it became increasingly obvious that the key to Nanking was the Purple Mountain, the hill of gorgeous effects which rose like some unwearying sentinel behind the city. It had not yet been seriously assailed, but it must not be supposed that its importance, both strategic and moral, at least in large measure, had not been realised. The revolutionary commander had wished to save his men. Perhaps even the stern heart of General Hsü Shao Cheng recoiled from such

* In addition to Admiral Sah's squadron the rest of the fleet had long since flown the revolutionary flag, some going over on the fall of Shanghai and others shortly afterwards.

a stupendous enterprise. In case there should be another way into Nanking he would first try to find it. By this time, however, nearly a week had elapsed—a week of fighting and bombardment *—and the besieging force was no nearer the citadel than on the day the revolutionary flag first flew from Tiger Hill.

In these circumstances the assault of Purple Mountain was decided upon, and on the late afternoon of the 30th of November the attack commenced. By the evening a foothold had been secured upon the upper slopes, and all night the battle raged for the mastery. Early in the morning of the 1st of December the Republican forces finally rushed the position, sealing the doom, as far as Nanking was concerned, of the Imperialist cause.

Amongst the operations connected with the siege, the assault and capture of Purple Mountain stands alone, worthy perhaps to rank, or at least to be spoken of in the same breath, with the stubborn Imperialist advance along the Hanyang range. Remarkable for the great courage and dash of the troops engaged, it was scarcely less remarkable for the courage of its inception. When Nature designed Purple Mountain she created a fortress which, with the expenditure of a minimum of human care and skill, could be rendered impregnable save to the attacks of artillery and famine. The requirements of the present campaign, however, forced the revolutionaries' hands. For once in China time was of value. It was a race against many things, but principally against the rapid ebbing of the financial tide. General Hsü Shao Cheng and the infant Republican Government which he served could not wait to starve men into surrender, nor were their guns of greater, if such great, range and effectiveness as those which the Imperialist gunners served. There was thus left only the assault direct on a position which was known to be held in strength, and on which it might be assumed that minimum of human care and skill had been expended which alone was required.

* There is reason to suppose that the bombardment on either side was not very serious. It has been publicly stated that the gunners on both sides arrived at an understanding regulating their fire, which was productive of the least destructive results.

Nevertheless there was no wavering amongst the men who had pledged themselves to what they believed to be their country's cause. They sprang to the assault with hearts which beat high with courage and hope. In the face of a withering fire they swarmed up the hill in open order, taking advantage of every bit of cover in the manner of scientific warfare, sometimes even forced to sling their rifles and climb their way upwards to get to grips with those fellow-countrymen who so pitilessly sought to mow them down. And in the end their reward came, together with their relief, which was materially assisted by a totally unexpected cause. General Chang Hsün, unless again the explanation was that his officers had failed him, had apparently considered the hill impregnable as it stood, and but little had been done to improve its great natural defences. As a consequence, in the last stages of the assault there was no serious obstacle to the final bayonet charge, and the Imperialist defenders, overwhelmed by the rush of maddened men, paid the last great toll of loyalty, affording yet another illustration of the horrors of civil war.

The end was now in sight. With thunderous blows the forces of the Revolution under General Hsü Shao Cheng were knocking at the gates of Nanking. A few hours later and General Chang Hsün decided on capitulation while there was yet time and authorised the proposal of terms. By the early morning of December 2nd the following conditions of surrender had been arranged:—

1. No massacre of Chinese or Manchus would take place after the taking of the city.
2. The lives and liberty of the Viceroy Chang Jen Chun and of the Tartar-General Tieh Liang were guaranteed.
3. The safety of General Chang Hsün and his soldiers, and their unmolested retirement across the river to Pukou and thence northward, was to be secured.

Evacuation rapidly ensued. General Chang left the city after escorting the Viceroy and Tartar-General to the Japanese Consulate, whence they retired to a gunboat and safety. The troops that were still left went also, and the day saw the completion of the revolutionary occupation.

Thus ended the struggle for Nanking. In the persons of



H.E. Chang Jen Chun, Viceroy of Nanking.



General Hsü Shao Cheng, the victor of Nanking.
General Officer commanding the Revolutionary forces at the siege of the city.

the principal actors, representative of such different types, it had brought to the surface many characteristic qualities. The Viceroy had exhibited in no small measure the spirit of compromise so prominent a feature of the Chinese mind. The Tartar-General had seemed to give indications of a courage worthy of the Manchu traditions of a more glorious age. In General Chang Hsün was manifested the lack of principle, the guile, and all the savage resolution of an age in China which it may be hoped has well-nigh passed away. Finally, there might be descried in the course of the revolutionary leader, General Hsü Shao Cheng, the calculating calmness of that modern scientific spirit which is to leaven the body politic of old China, and which doubtless would have inspired him to greater things had the need arisen. Fortunately, in the cause of humanity the tragedy of Nanking was streaked with comedy, and the obvious omissions of the defence avoided what might have been a sustained and bloody operation.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE ARMISTICE AND THE FALL OF THE PRINCE REGENT

IT has been recorded at the commencement of the last chapter that on the fall of Hanyang the revolutionaries at Wuchang were profoundly discouraged. It was borne in upon them that from a military point of view they were fighting a losing cause. This frame of mind early bore fruit in a communication by General Li Yuan Hung that he was prepared to accept the Throne's offer of a Government on constitutional as opposed to republican lines. A day or two earlier than this His Majesty's Minister, Sir John Jordan, had felt impelled to reiterate his protests to the Central Government on the subject of the danger and anxieties to which British subjects were continuously exposed at Hankow, and Yuan Shih K'ai had stated in reply "that the attitude of the Imperial troops was entirely defensive, and that if an armistice on mutually satisfactory terms could be arranged, he would gladly give orders to suspend hostilities."* At the same time the Premier authorised his Majesty's Minister to convey an intimation to this effect to General Li Yuan Hung through the medium of Mr. H. Goffe, since created C.M.G., His Majesty's Acting Consul-General at Hankow. In this way Mr. Goffe was placed in a position to assist the parties to an understanding, which eventuated in the series of armistices which now ensued. Acting on his instructions, the Consul-General immediately placed himself in communication with General Li Yuan Hung, with the result that on the fall of Hanyang he was enabled to communicate to Peking the following as the terms suggested by General Li:—

1. Fifteen days' armistice, during which territory at present occupied shall be held by each side.

* White Book, No. 1 of 1912, at p. 52.

2. Assembly in Shanghai of representatives from all the provinces that have joined the revolutionary party; these to elect plenipotentiaries to negotiate with representatives appointed by Yuan Shih K'ai.

3. If necessary, extension of armistice for a further fifteen days.

Yuan Kung-pao, however, was not prepared at present to go quite so far, and responded with counter-proposals:—

1. Ground as at present occupied to be held by each side. No reconnoitring to be done in secret.

2. Three days fixed as duration of the armistice.

3. Advantage must not be taken of the armistice by men-of-war during the period mentioned to anchor at Wuchang or Hankow up against the south and north banks, and so acquire a more favourable position. Until the expiration of the armistice the ships must drop down river some distance below Wuchang.

4. During the armistice neither side to get reinforcements, erect fortifications, or otherwise increase their military strength.

5. In order that any infringement of the conditions may be obviated, the British Consul-General to sign armistice agreement as witness.

These terms, with unimportant modifications, were accepted by Wuchang, an agreement being signed on the 3rd of December. The length of time provided, however, was entirely inadequate to enable any settlement to be arrived at, and on the next day proposals for an extension were telegraphed by Yuan Shih K'ai in the following terms:—

1. An extension for fifteen days of the present armistice on its expiration.

2. Troops shall not be sent to the South by the Northern Army; nor shall any proceed to the North from the Southern Army. (This is intended to apply no less to Nanking than to Wuchang.)

3. Men from the various provinces, who are now in North China, will be appointed by the Prime Minister in order that representatives of the various provinces appointed by the Southern Army may discuss with them the general situation.

4. The Prime Minister will nominate T'ang Shao Yi as his representative to discuss the situation with General Li Yuan Hung or his representative.

These terms, however, were not so readily accepted by the revolutionary leaders, and it was not till the 9th of December that an agreement was signed, providing for the cessation of military operations everywhere during fifteen

days, except in Szechuen, Shensi, and Shansi, where the terms could not be made known owing to the interruption of the telegraph, and limiting reinforcements to those provinces. Thus the position was secured, by a curious coincidence, and as some thought of happy augury, up to the eve of the great festival in the Christian Church which celebrates the coming of Peace on Earth, and with good intentions on either side there was time to accomplish much.

Meanwhile Yuan Shih K'ai had been somewhat criticised for his readiness to treat at this stage. It seems to have been the military opinion that despite the fact of the fleet being controlled by the revolutionaries, the Imperialists might have crossed and attacked Wuchang under cover of the Hanyang guns, and it had been urged that he should have followed up his success at Hanyang by assaulting Wuchang and making the endeavour to stamp out the revolt throughout the "Three Cities." His failure to do so, it was argued, demonstrated clearly his lack of sincerity in his championship of the Manchu cause.

The argument, however, looked at dispassionately, seems hardly a sound one. Yuan Shih K'ai was influenced by other and broader considerations. He knew, and the revolutionaries knew, what the issue at Wuchang must ultimately be if pressed to the bitter end. But the time had passed when the movement could be crushed by the sword. By prompt and stern measures at the outset it might have been accomplished, but the good fortune which had pursued the revolutionary efforts and the evident weakness of the Central Government had combined to promote the Republican cause. What may well have been a mistaken policy at the end of October, before the country at large had declared itself, represented the counsels of the highest wisdom now. The suppression of the revolt at Wuchang at this late stage could only be the first step in the reconquest of the Southern provinces, and that the task could ever be completely accomplished, or a lasting settlement by this means be produced, no one who understood the depth of Southern feeling believed. To press home the Imperialist victory with such a conviction in his mind would have laid a grave responsibility on Yuan Shih K'ai. Moreover, not unsensitive to foreign opinion, he was aware

that authoritative judgment in many quarters held that the time for conflict had passed. And so it came about that the entrance was made upon the path which it was supposed would be the path of compromise.

How vain was this supposition and futile the Imperialist hopes that were founded upon it, will be duly told. First, however, reference must be made to another incident.

On December 6th, while the agreement for extension of the armistice was still under negotiation, the Prince Regent fell, suddenly relegated to private life in the terms of the following Decree:—

"The Prince Regent has received the following verbal instructions from the Empress-Dowager:—

"The Prince Regent has presented a verbal memorial to the effect that during the three years of his Regency his employment of officials and his administration of the Government have met with public disfavour. The establishment of a Constitution was no more than empty talk, and corruption and malpractices were being carried on to such an extent that the minds of the people had gradually been alienated and the Empire dismembered. Through the mismanagement of one man the whole nation had been thrown into the most grievous distress. It was too late for him to show his repentance by pangs of heart and aches of head, for if he clung to his high office and did not resign he would cease to have the confidence of the people, and though he continued to administer the Government, his commands would be of no effect. What improvement was to be expected under such circumstances? He therefore humbly prayed to be allowed to resign the Regency and to have no further part in the affairs of the State. His statement is most earnest and sincere.

"We have been living in retreat in Our Palace and have been ignorant of the Government's policy. But the thought of the rising in Wuchang, followed by that in other provinces, the dire effects of the warfare which meet Our eyes on every side, and its disastrous result on the commerce of friendly nations—the thought of all this keeps Us awake at night and robs Us of Our appetite. It is therefore most important that all the circumstances should be at once investigated and a scheme adopted for pacifying the Empire.

"The Prince Regent is of a liberal, honest, and conscientious disposition, but though most earnest in administration, he lacks the ability to cope with the present situation; he has allowed himself to be befooled, and the whole nation has suffered as the result. His prayer to be allowed to resign should therefore be granted. We hereby command that his seal of Regency be given up and destroyed, and that he retire to his own palace as the Prince of Ch'un, and take no other part in the Government. We further command that he be awarded an annual pension of Taels 50,000, to be paid out of the Civil List. In future the

Prime Minister and the Ministers of the Cabinet shall be responsible for the employment of officials and the whole administration of the Government. All orders shall before promulgation be sealed with the Imperial Seal, and We shall perform the ceremonial of Audiences together with the Emperor. As the Emperor is still of tender age, some persons should be responsible for his personal safety. We therefore appoint Shih Hsü and Hsü Shih Ch'ang Grand Guardians, and charge them with the duty of carefully guarding the Emperor.

"In view of the calamities which have occurred in every quarter, and the dangers which beset the Empire, the Princes, Dukes and others, who are intimately related to Us, and who share Our fortunes, should each and all endeavour to cope with the present crisis, observing strictly the regulations of Our Clan and not overstepping the bounds.

"The Ministers of State, being entrusted with heavy responsibilities, should show themselves all the more loyal and devoted; they should purify their hearts and endeavour to put a stop to corrupt practices, so as to promote the welfare of the country and the prosperity of the people.

"All Our subjects should understand that We are not keeping the sovereign power for Ourselves, but are making a genuine reform in the interests of the people, who must on their part maintain good order and peacefully pursue their occupations, so that the evils arising from conflict and partition of territory may be avoided, and that a glorious and harmonious government may be instituted. This is Our sincere hope."

Thus was made the last propitiatory offering to the people. It was an event not without its pathetic side. Young both in years and experience, the Regent was a weak but not an evil man. A son of the progressive Seventh Prince,* the founder of the House of Ch'un, his childhood had been passed in a not illiberal atmosphere. Apart from his hatred of Yuan Shih K'ai, which had led him to subordinate the interests of the State to the desire for private vengeance, he had intended well, and some hopes had been entertained of an improving state of affairs when he took up the reins of government. But these had been doomed to disappointment. The intrigues of the Empress-Dowager, a stronger type, imbued with ambition of emulating the career of her famous aunt, Tzu Hsi, had made his task a difficult one, while he had not the strength to stand against the thoroughly bad counsels which were continuously thrust upon him on every side. "Man is by nature good," says the elementary classic which used to form the corner-stone of Chinese education, and true or not in general, it is probable

* The seventh son of the Emperor Taokuang.

that the Regent's nature was amongst those that went to prove the canon. But he could not prevail against his environment—probably, regarded dispassionately, it was not reasonably to be expected—and he failed to fulfil the hopes that had been formed of him.

Clearly the fate of the Regent makes a demand upon our sympathy, but, on the other hand, and regarded from another standpoint, it was perhaps a just nemesis. Had Yuan Kung-pao been retained in power the ship of State might never have reached such troublous seas, for change in a progressive rush had got to come, and a higher statesmanship might have breasted the rising tide.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE PEACE CONFERENCE AT SHANGHAI

ON the conclusion of the first agreement of armistice an Imperial Decree had been issued appointing Yuan Shih K'ai Plenipotentiary, with instructions to send a representative to the South to discuss the situation with the revolutionary leaders and prepare the way towards peace. Yuan had selected as his representative T'ang Shao Yi.

Mr. T'ang, to whose previous career reference has already been made, as a matter of choice would have elected to avoid the honour which was thus conferred upon him. He was in indifferent health, and the task was one involving grave difficulty and a truly burdensome responsibility, to say nothing of possible danger. His sense of loyalty to the Premier, however, enabled him to overcome his disinclination, and on the afternoon of the 9th of December he arrived at Hankow.

That T'ang Shao Yi proceeded to Hankow was a fact of some significance. It will be remembered that the first proposals put forward by, or perhaps it would be more correct to say in the name of, General Li Yuan Hung, had stipulated for a conference at Shanghai. Peking, however, had ignored the idea, and the Premier had telegraphed after the issue of the Imperial Decree appointing himself Plenipotentiary that he would send T'ang Shao Yi to Wuchang to confer with General Li.

From the Imperialist point of view this course was dictated by obvious considerations. On the other side of the river was the victorious Imperialist army, resting behind the great guns of Hanyang, which dominated the provincial capital. Again, in any case and at any time General Li Yuan Hung himself might be relied upon to be less

uncompromising than the men who had promoted the Revolution and for years had been brooding over their country's wrongs, especially now when he had been reported as prepared to accept a constitutional government under the Manchus. The situation of General Li at the moment did something to assist this line of argument. Though he might not in the first instance have been a willing adherent, the course of subsequent events justified the demand that he should be treated with as the recognised leader of the insurrection. He had been widely proclaimed the head of the Military Republican Government of China, and it was with him that the Imperialist troops had for nearly two months been at war, so that he occupied a position which the Central Government were entitled to refuse to ignore.

It was scarcely to be expected that the strong Republican coterie at Shanghai would adopt the same view. It soon transpired that they were not prepared to allow the Imperialists the advantage which would result from their great strategic strength. Nor were they prepared to entrust their fortunes to General Li Yuan Hung, who was a soldier and not even a politician or even a diplomat. Though he had performed great services to the Revolution, he was not well-known to the Republican party at large, nor was the strength of his principles sufficient to justify his investment with plenary powers. There was also another and a more picturesque, if less cogent, reason in the back of the revolutionary mind. "Beneath the city wall," runs the Chinese saying, "is made peace," which being interpreted means that when the enemy is at the gate, then is the time and place to yield to his demands. In other words, treaty-making at the gate is the last act of humiliation of a vanquished people. To treat at Wuchang would have seemed to admit something too near defeat, and might have produced an unfavourable impression throughout the country. The result was that when Mr. T'ang arrived at Hankow he found that the Shanghai Republicans had protested against the negotiations taking place at Wuchang, and demanded that they be transferred to Shanghai, which with its perfervid Republican atmosphere was euphemistically referred to as neutral ground.

The situation was one of some delicacy. The Peking delegate, with his colleagues, had in effect been accredited to General Li, and, self-effacing as the latter was prepared to be, in any change something of a slight must be implied. Moreover, Mr. T'ang's instructions were to negotiate at Wuchang, and on those he took his stand, absolutely refusing to leave Hankow. From the standpoint of the Shanghai party, on the other hand, there was no room for sentiment. The opportunity had come for the Republican party to create a recognised head. Hitherto men had not known whether to look to Wuchang or Shanghai, whether the Kiangsu group or the Hupei combination constituted the central body of the movement. The action taken by Dr. Wu Ting Fang and his colleagues at this juncture finally set this point at rest. And curiously enough it was ultimately settled apparently without friction, despite the course pursued. This was neither more nor less than a communication to Yuan Shih K'ai to the effect that General Li Yuan Hung had no authority to negotiate, and that no arrangement come to with him would receive the assent of the great body of the Republican party. At the same time a request was once more preferred for a change of the venue to Shanghai.

For a few days the matter seemed to hang in the balance, and to onlookers a serious split in the Republican party seemed inevitable as a result of this apparent affront on the man who had come to be regarded as the hero of the Revolution. It was a time of the most profound gravity. But suddenly the clouds cleared away and there was a promise of negotiations under what appeared to be favouring auspices. General Li Yuan Hung displayed a magnanimity which only accorded with what his general bearing had been from the commencement of the outbreak. Sacrificing his personal feelings, he insisted on retiring from a position he had never sought, and for the good of the cause applied the weight of his influence to securing the wishes of the Kiangsu group. Yuan Shih K'ai agreed to the change of venue, and instructed T'ang Shao Yi to proceed to Shanghai, while the Shanghai section of the Republican party emerged with enhanced prestige.

Mr. T'ang arrived in Shanghai on the 17th of December.

On the 18th the first meeting of the Conference took place. The place of meeting was the Town Hall of the Foreign Settlement at Shanghai, which had been put at the disposal of the delegates by the Municipal Council.

It was an occasion of deep significance. On the one side were the representatives of institutions which had lived continuously for more years perhaps than any other institutions of the human race. On the other were children of a people but a generation ago reckoned the most conservative, advocating republican principles in their most advanced form. Finally both sides accepted the accommodation of a foreign roof on Chinese soil, the result of an invitation proffered in a spirit of sympathy and accepted with appreciation. A few years ago these things could not have been. But now the unbending and often insensate pride of an Imperial House had been broken. Something of the sacred nature of the rights of individual man had come home to the people's minds. Something had been learnt of the lessons of toleration.

The issue was the simple one of Constitutional Monarchy or Republic, a distinction which political experience has shown to be one but of form and name. The hopes which had been formed, however, of a rapid adjustment of the nation's differences were doomed to disappointment. It had been assumed that the fact of parties on both sides having agreed to "come and reason together" implied that their deliberations would be informed with the spirit of reasonableness. But in effect this proved not to be the case. Rightly or wrongly, the Republican delegates early laid down as a condition of discussion the adoption of the Republican principle of government. In brief, they were only willing to discuss the methods by which effect could be given to the change on which they insisted, and only in connection with making provision for the Imperial family in the future were they willing to consider the Imperial point of view.

The first meeting, as has been said, took place on the afternoon of the 18th of December, when there were present H.E. T'ang Shao Yi and four other Commissioners* on the

* Their names were Erh Kuan Chan, Hsu T'ing Lin, Chao Chun Ni, and Feng Yi Tung.

Imperialist side, and Dr. Wu Ting Fang and five others representing the Republicans.*

The first sitting appears to have been occupied in the main by discussion of the armistice and the way in which it was being observed, or, to be correct, not being observed, by the armies on both sides. After three hours' somewhat heated debate the following conclusions were arrived at and embodied in an official minute:—

"1. Credentials were exchanged.

"2. Commissioner T'ang agreed to telegraph to Yuan Shih K'ai conveying the demand of the Republicans that the order to stop the fighting and the capturing of places by the Manchu Army should be carried out effectively in Hupei, Shensi, Shantung, Anhui, Kiangsu, and Fengtien, and that no further Conference should be held until a satisfactory reply from Yuan Shih K'ai had been received.

"3. Commissioner Wu agrees to wire to General Li Yuan Hung of Hupei and the Republican Generals of Shansi and Shensi, ordering them to discontinue fighting and further attacks upon the Manchu troops."

While the events which have just been described were occurring, the Foreign Ministers in Peking had held a meeting on the 15th of December, at which it had been determined, subject to the approval of the home Governments, to present simultaneously through their Consuls in Shanghai a communication to the Commissioners at the Peace Conference in the hope of assisting towards a settlement. The proposed action was duly approved, and on the morning of the 20th of December the representatives of Great Britain, France, Germany, Japan, Russia, and the United States called on the chief delegates, Dr. Wu and Mr. T'ang, and delivered an identic note in the following terms:—

"The Legation of Great Britain (or as the case might be) has been instructed by its Government to make the following unofficial representations to the Commissioners whose task it is to negotiate the conditions for restoring the peace in China: that the Government of Great Britain considers that the continuation of the present struggle in China exposes not only the country itself, but also material interests and the security of foreigners, to grave danger.

* Their names were Wen Tsung Yao, Wang Chung Hui, Wang Chao Ming, Hu Ying, and Wang Cheng T'ing.



Dr. Wu Ting Fang:
Chief Republican Peace Delegate.



H.E. T'ang Shao Yi:
Chief Imperialist Peace Delegate.

"Maintaining the attitude of absolute neutrality which they had hitherto adopted, the Government of Great Britain deems it its duty unofficially to call the attention of the two delegates to the need of arriving as soon as possible at an understanding, calculated to put an end to the present conflict, being persuaded that this view is in accordance with the wishes of the two parties concerned."

Dr. Wu Ting Fang, who expressed the wish that reporters might be present, to which, however, the Consuls objected, made a speech in which he thanked the Consuls for calling upon him, and, according to the *North China Daily News*, said, in effect, that having heard the representations from their respective Governments, he would pay due regard to them. He was a man of peace and a member of several peace societies, and, that indicating his principles, he need scarcely say that he would do his best to accomplish what was desired. It had to be remembered that the Chinese were fighting for liberty, freedom, and good government, and further, that if peace was hastily patched up, without due consideration, it might lead to serious consequences. If another revolution were to break out it would be much worse than the present one, and therefore great care had to be taken to secure a peace which would be based upon solid foundations and be permanent and lasting. If peace could be secured upon these terms it would not only be beneficial to all foreigners in China, but to all foreign nations, and he felt sure that the Consuls and their respective Governments would see the justice of his remarks and would sympathise with the aims of his party. He would do his best to secure peace on these terms, and if he could do so in a way not contrary to the instructions of his people, they might rest assured that he would do so.

The same note was subsequently presented by the Consuls-General to H.E. T'ang Shao Yi, who replied with formal but at the same time cordial thanks.

On the afternoon of the same day the Conference was resumed in consequence of a telegram from the Premier stating that the Imperial Generals had received orders to stop fighting. The proceedings were primarily concerned with discussion of the renewal of the armistice, but at the same time the position of the Republicans was made very clear, while the meeting was remarkable for an extraordinary

volte-face of his Excellency T'ang Shao Yi. In the evening the following brief statement was issued:—

"1. It is mutually agreed that the armistice should be extended for a period of seven days, *i.e.*, from December 24th, 8 a.m., to December 31st, 8 a.m.

"2. Dr. Wu Ting Fang advocated the necessity of establishing a Republican form of government for China. He believed that China is fully prepared to welcome the new Republic. He said in substance as follows:—

"'The people of China will accept no other form of government than a Republic founded upon the will of the people. Since we can appoint delegates to represent us both in the various Provincial Assemblies and in the National Assembly at Peking, why are we not qualified to elect a President as the chief executive of the nation?

"'The Manchus have shown their utter incapacity for governing the people for 267 years. They must go out. A government may be well likened to a trading company. If the manager, through incapacity or dishonesty, causes the failure of the concern, he has no business to continue in office; a new manager must be elected by the shareholders. The Republican party does not intend to drive the Manchus out, nor to illtreat them. On the contrary, they want to place them on a perfect equality with the Chinese, enjoying together the blessings of liberty, equality, and fraternity.'

"H.E. T'ang expressed his readiness to accept Dr. Wu's view, but as the matter is one of the greatest importance he has to communicate with Peking."

To this somewhat untimely expression of sympathy on the part of the principal Imperial Commissioner further reference may for the moment be postponed. Just now it is more convenient to follow the course of events.

The arrangements for renewal of the armistice and the views of the Republicans being duly communicated to the Premier, pending the reply of Peking to what was really a Republican ultimatum there was no formal meeting. Matters had in fact reached a deadlock. The Republicans insisted on a Republic, the Imperialists on the retention of a Monarchy. The latter were willing that the Emperor should be deprived of the substance of power, but they attached importance to the retention of the form. The Republicans, on the other hand, were no less strong on the matter of form, and would not be content with the surrender to the people of the real power. The fact

of the matter was that anti-Manchu feeling was so strong in the South that nothing less than abdication would meet the case. Moreover, even among the less extreme members of the party there was a genuine distrust of Manchu diplomacy. They dared not, had they been willing, leave them with the shadow of power, lest, when times were less unfavourable, they devise means to recover the substance, and reassert the domination from which the revolutionaries had now virtually secured relief.

There was much to be said for both points of view. Among many competent observers the opinion prevailed and still prevails that China is not yet ripe even for a Constitutional Monarchy, much less for a Republican form of government. In other words, in the opinion of many the time has not arrived for the realisation of the ideal of government for the people by the people in any form. It was clear, however, that the experiment was destined to be made, and on the whole the hope of success seemed greater under the monarchical form. The reason of this was clear. The majority of the population are not educated up to the point of differentiating between political systems, but they understand an Emperor or a Prince, and the retention of the kingly office, it was felt, might prove a connecting link between the real governing power and the general mass of the people. Though the argument is a little apt to be overdone, it cannot be denied that the Son of Heaven is a sort of cult amongst the Chinese and reflects the sentiments of the race. Remove the restraining influence of the idea which dominates their lives and no man can predict the outcome. It was generally thought that the failure to appreciate this fact, or, to be correct, the refusal to do so, for many a staunch Chinese Republican admits the greater suitability of a monarchical form of government, indicated a lack of reasonableness among the revolutionary leaders which did not promise too well for the future. It was felt that there was great need for counsels of moderation in the Republican ranks.

But this line of reasoning, theoretically sound though it must be admitted to be, scarcely takes into account the Republican point of view. Simplicity itself, it might be roughly resolved into two considerations, which must be

firmly grasped if the position is to be rightly understood. Briefly, in the first place the protagonists of the Revolution had their own ideals of government, and they did not trust Yuan Shih K'ai to realise them. Apprehensive of his growing influence and suspecting his political honesty, they believed, rightly or wrongly, that under a Monarchy his power would become too great, and that a Republican form of government would provide more effective checks and balances. Secondly, and to repeat once more, because of its great importance, in scarcely different language what has been said before, the keynotes of the revolutionary policy are almost inconceivable mistrust of Imperial promises and fear of Manchu subtleties; they could not bring themselves to believe that with the retention of the Manchus a certainly satisfactory outcome was assured. Hence the determined front. The Manchus, who had had their chance, must go. To the revolutionary mind there was no other solution.

In the days that followed on the second meeting of the Conference on December 20th, much secret history must have been made which probably will never be written. There ultimately emerged, however, a proposal which Mr. T'ang had ascertained would be acceptable to the Republicans, in principle, as a solution of the present difficulty. This proposal was that a National Convention should be summoned to decide the question of the form of government for the future. It was a suggestion that could not well have been rejected by the champions of democracy, provided reasonably practical effect could be given to it, but it did not prove altogether acceptable to the Imperial Government. In the present temper of the country an anti-dynastic majority could almost be assured, and it seemed but another, if from the standpoint of the Throne a more dignified, way of securing the removal of the Manchu House. T'ang Shao Yi's telegrams, however, were so insistent to the effect that it offered the only hope that the Manchus ultimately gave way. On the 28th of December the Cabinet promulgated the following Imperial Decree:—

"We have respectfully received the following Edict from Her Majesty the Empress-Dowager Lung Yu:—

"The telegraphic memorial of T'ang Shao Yi transmitted by the Cabinet states that Wu Ting Fang, representative of the People's Army, insists strongly that the wish of the people aims at the establishment of a Republican form of government. At the outbreak of disturbances at Wuchang, We acceded to the request of the Tzuchengyuan in promulgating the 19 Constitutional Articles of good faith, and in taking Our oath at the Imperial Ancestral Temple We had hoped that armed conflicts would be suspended at an early date, and that We might enjoy with the people the blessing of peace. But simply on account of Our good faith not being well established, political strife has continued.

"We consider the problems of the adoption of a Constitutional Monarchy or of a Republic for Our country to have an important bearing on Our foreign and domestic affairs. The question could be solved neither by a section of the populace nor by the Throne alone. There ought to be convoked a National Convention to determine the question at issue.

"According to the memorials of the Ministers of State, they request a meeting of the Princes closely related to Us for considering the question. We have questioned them personally, and they have agreed on this step.

"The Cabinet is ordered to telegraph this idea to T'ang Shao Yi, who is to make known the same to the representatives of the People's Army. On the one hand the Cabinet should speedily and carefully draft election laws by mutual agreement, which are then to be executed for the convocation of a National Assembly at an appointed time. On the other hand, the Cabinet is to consult with Wu Ting Fang for an agreement to suspend warfare as a preliminary step, so that the people may be relieved from suffering and the great trouble pacified.

"We are of opinion that a Ruler is appointed for the People who are created by Heaven, and his duty is to act as their shepherd. It is for that one man to nurture the people and not for the people to serve him. The Emperor, on ascending to the throne and still, is in his tender age, and We cannot bear to cause sufferings to the people and to injure the whole country. We only hope that the decision of the Convention will be based on the interests of the Country and the well-being of the People. Heaven hears what the People hear and sees what they see. We wish and sincerely hope that Our patriotic soldiers and subjects will mutually act in accordance with the principles of justice and join together to seek the public weal."

The issue of an Imperial Decree at this juncture, and particularly in the lofty tone of this utterance, conflicted somewhat with the Republican ideas of the fitness of things. They seemed to think that the Palace party had no longer any standing in the matter, the fact being that their successes tended to cause them to carry things with rather a high hand. Confident of ultimate victory, they inclined

to be a little overbearing in their attitude and, to indulge in a moderate description, not too reasonable in their demands. Dr. Wu Ting Fang, indeed, refused to recognise the Edict, apparently considering the Republican party as already the fount of authority. As T'ang, however, was prepared to negotiate he did not carry his objections to the length of refusing to proceed with the Conference. Accordingly, a third meeting took place on the 29th of December, which resulted in the following agreement:—

"1. It is mutually agreed that the question as to what form of government should be adopted shall be discussed and decided by the National Convention, and that the decision of the National Convention shall be binding upon and be recognised by both parties.

"2. During the time which must elapse before the National Convention comes to a decision upon the form of government to be in future adopted, the Manchu Government shall not accept or attempt to obtain foreign loans.

"3. All the Manchu troops in the provinces of Shansi, Shensi, Hupei, Anhui, and Kiangsu shall evacuate their present positions and be withdrawn to a distance beyond 100 li within five days, beginning on December 31st, at 8 a.m., leaving behind them only the police to protect the places thus evacuated. The Republican troops shall neither advance upon nor occupy these evacuated places, so as to avoid collisions, until special regulations have been made upon mutual agreement within five days, when further withdrawal of troops shall be carried out according to these regulations. The Manchu troops shall not advance upon and attack those places in the Province of Shantung which have already fallen into the hands of the Republicans, nor shall Republican troops advance upon and capture new places.

"It is understood that the Convention referred to will include not only those delegates who are assembled at Nanking, but others to be selected."

This arrangement was duly communicated to the Premier, together with the following further Republican demands:—

"1. Two-thirds of the total number of representatives present shall form a quorum.

"2. A majority of votes shall decide all questions.

"3. The scene of the Convention shall be the city of Shanghai.

"4. The Convention shall be opened on January 8th, 1912."

It says much for the restraint of the Central Government that it brought itself to discuss these terms. It is true that

it was weak and tottering and that the situation called for sacrifices, but there is a limit to all things. One-sided to the last degree, these terms were offensive to common sense and repugnant to good faith. Either the proposal for a National Convention represented an honest attempt at a solution, or it was intended merely as a device to spare the pride of the reigning House. In either case the calling of the Convention within ten days must defeat the end in view. On the one hand, it would not be in any sense a national judgment, and on the other, it must prove such a ridiculous farce as to aggravate the Imperial loss of dignity that must ensue.

Nevertheless, Yuan Shih K'ai replied patiently, accepting the three articles agreed between T'ang and Wu, on condition that the second and third, concerning the matter of contracting foreign loans and withdrawing troops, should be mutual in the sense of also applying to the Republican side. As regards the further demands, he pointed out their unreasonableness and the impossibility of securing the verdict of the country by such means. Before, however, his telegram had reached Shanghai another sitting of the Conference had taken place on the 30th, at which the following further articles had been agreed upon :—

"1. The National Convention shall be composed of representatives from the different 'sections' of China. Each province shall form one section. Inner Mongolia and Outer Mongolia together shall form one section; Eastern Tibet and Western Tibet together shall form one section.

"Each 'section' shall be entitled to send three delegates and entitled to three votes, but in the event of a lesser number from any 'section' attending, such a section shall still be entitled to three votes.

"2. The delegates from the different 'sections' shall be summoned by wire to the National Convention in the following manner, namely: (*a*) Those from Kiangsu, Anhui, Kiangsi, Hupei, Hunan, Shansi, Shensi, Chekiang, Fukien, Kuangtung, Kuangsi, Szechuen, Yunnan, and Kueichow, in the name of the Provisional Republican Government; (*b*) those from Chihli, Fengtien, Kirin, Heilungkiang, Kansu, Chinese Turkestan, Shantung, and Honan, in the name of the Manchu Government, and in addition to this, the Provincial Assemblies of these eight 'sections' to be notified by wire, in the name of the Provisional Republican Government; (*c*) those from Mongolia and Tibet, separately, in the names of both the Manchu and Provisional Republican Governments.

"3. When the delegates present represent three-fourths of the 'sections,' they shall be considered a quorum and may meet for discussion.

(Signed) "WU TING FANG,
"T'ANG SHAO YI."

This latest action of T'ang Shao Yi placed Yuan Shih K'ai in a position of grave difficulty. Yuan was the Imperial Plenipotentiary charged with the task of discussing a settlement. T'ang was his duly accredited representative. He had no authority to conclude agreements or to do more than secure proposals for presentation to the High Authorities in Peking for their consideration. Yet without reference to Peking he had concluded two agreements on lines which merely deprived the Imperialists of the fruits of their victories at Hankow and Hanyang without any compensating advantages. He had also taken the surprising step of expressing himself as personally in sympathy with the Republican cause.

His Excellency T'ang's explanation was that on arrival in Shanghai he found the revolutionary party so violently pro-Republican that anything like discussion in the ordinary sense was rendered utterly impossible. The revolutionary delegates had started the debate, or at least had wished to start it, on the basis of the ultimate formation of a Republic having already been accepted in principle. Even the idea of calling into being a National Assembly to decide the issue had been strenuously opposed in the first instance, and it was only after a weary course of negotiation that the Imperial Commissioner had been able to secure even this concession.

The view that outside observers took of the matter was a very different one. By birth a Cantonese, Mr. T'ang had been educated in America, and it was generally understood that if not a Republican at heart, he had an open mind on the question. His long and intimate connection with Yuan Shih K'ai as subordinate and colleague was of course well known. It had always been understood that much of the progressive force of Yuan's mind and most of its practical manifestation had been supplied by the ability and experience of T'ang Shao Yi. In all the circumstances of the present juncture the inference suggested itself that the latter, who

had never feared to assume responsibility, had thought, once he appreciated the situation in the South and the strength of feeling in the Yangtze Valley, that he could force the hand of Peking in such a way as to assure the triumph of Republicanism and leave Yuan with no alternative but to assume the Presidency. It was even thought in some quarters that the Premier had been a party to this unusual procedure.

Whatever the truth may be, and there is no evidence to implicate Yuan or reason to doubt his later strenuous denial, it immediately became clear that the Imperial Commissioner had gone too far. The course of the negotiations had been followed with the closest attention, and the recent proceedings at the Conference had provoked the strongest feelings of resentment and distrust. The line of cleavage between North and South is strongly marked. The calm and dignified Northerner has little appreciation for the political ambitions of his more mentally-agile Southern neighbour. He has no desire to be made over to any system of government of theirs. The army again, which fought well and suffered severely at the bidding of Yuan Shih K'ai, was in no mood to have fought in vain.

Yuan's reply to T'ang's latest communication, that of the 30th, was the only one possible in the circumstances. He refused to recognise the set of articles relating to the National Convention and reminded him that his powers were limited to discussion. On the following day Yuan telegraphed the Cabinet's ideas as to the conditions on which a National Convention should be elected.

T'ang's reply was to tender his resignation, which was accepted on the 2nd of January, and the Peace Conference came to an abrupt end.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE REPUBLIC AT NANKING

THE uncompromising attitude of the Republican delegates was emphasised by the nature of contemporary events. Though ostensibly negotiations were proceeding for peace, which presumably would involve some sort of amalgamation of the rival factions, there was no cessation of the measures already in progress for the foundation of a central Republican Government at Nanking. Determined on a Republic, the revolutionaries were steadily preparing for eventualities. Foreseeing the probable failure of the Peace Conference, they were alive to the advantages of securing that additional strength to their position which would result from the spectacle of a united Republican Government at the historic "Southern Capital." Finally, financial considerations decreed either an early settlement with Peking or a separation between the Northern and Southern provinces; certainly they would not admit of protracted negotiations.

It has already been recorded how in the comparatively early days of the Revolution, or at least when it was scarcely a month old, Shanghai had taken steps to assume the lead. As a consequence a meeting took place in Shanghai at the beginning of December, shortly after the fall of Nanking, at which was discussed the formation of a Provisional Government. This meeting, however, seems to have lacked unanimity, especially on the subject of the choice of a President, and though it purported to elect various officers of State, the only appointment which requires to be recorded was that of Huang Hsing as Commander-in-Chief of the Republican Forces.

But while the revolutionaries at Shanghai had been thus engaged, and in fact at a time anterior to the Shanghai

movement, the initial successes at the "Three Cities" had encouraged the leaders at Wuchang to take steps to summon representatives of the different provinces to meet for the purpose of discussing the formation of a Government. These delegates met in the early part of November, and on the 16th of that month General Li Yuan Hung notified the foreign Consuls at Hankow that the representatives of provinces had decided to form a Government, with its seat at Wuchang. At the same time a demand was made for foreign recognition. This, of course, could not be accorded, the Imperial Government still being the authority to which the representatives of the Powers were accredited, and the revolutionaries having not yet acquired the status of a *de facto* Government.

General Li and his colleagues, who could hardly have been surprised at the fate of their application, continued to work towards the desired end. By the 3rd of December they were in a position to publish a written Constitution based on the American principle, under which, *inter alia*, the Liberty of the Subject and of the Press was secured, and provision made for compulsory military service, while a President was to be elected for a term of three years to exercise the supreme executive authority under the control of a national assembly which should be representative of the Chinese dominions.

Thus it came about that a dual authority came into existence, and for a time at least it appeared as though some friction must arise. The leaders at Wuchang, who had borne the heat and burden of the day, were naturally averse to seeing the theorists of Shanghai arrogate to themselves the functions of a Central Government. Though they were willing to accord them every reasonable measure of recognition that might be demanded, they did not see their way to acknowledge their leadership. The fall of Nanking, however, made it possible for them to effect a merger of their interests. It provided a neutral ground, where they could meet and form an effective combination.

By the 21st of December these delegates from the rival camps, who at this time claimed to represent thirteen provinces, had reached Nanking, where they forthwith commenced to hold meetings to discuss the form of government. It soon became clear that generally speaking the

Wuchang views were likely to prevail. One of the first actions of the Convention was to reverse the appointment of Huang Hsing as Commander-in-Chief, and appoint in his stead General Li Yuan Hung, on the very proper ground that he had held the chief command for so long that he could not without good cause be superseded. A little later the Constitution in the form proposed by the Wuchang draftsmen was formally adopted.*

At this juncture Dr. Sun Yat Sen† arrived in China, landing on the 24th of December at Shanghai.

Sun Yat Sen's arrival was most timely. His was a name which at least stood in the estimation of his revolutionary countrymen for Liberty, while his services to the Republican cause set him above considerations of party. He could, without much difficulty, be accepted by the rival factions, provisionally at least, as the Republican leader. Accordingly, on the 29th of December a meeting of the provincial delegates took place, at which he was elected provisional President.

For all practical purposes the election was unanimous, only the representatives of one province, Chekiang, having other views. It could hardly be described, however, as a popular election in the sense of the deliberate expression of the people's will, for the people at large knew little of Dr. Sun, or even, for the most part, of the delegates who purported to function on their behalf. From this point of view, indeed, the proceedings appeared in the light of farce. Nevertheless, the revolutionary delegates, seeing that their minds were set on a Republic, and that they were bent on resolutely refusing all Imperial overtures, had taken a wise step. Many years must elapse, as none knew better than they, before a system of true representation of the people would be evolved in China. For long it must continue to be government by the few, call it Republic or what they would, and seeing what their policy was, they now adopted the only course open to them.

Thus was realised for Sun Yat Sen something of his life-long dreams. He now enjoyed the opportunity to serve his country and assist her in her heavy travail. Only at the beginning of the troublous period of momentous change,

* *Vide* Appendix B.

† *Vide ante*, pp. 10 and 85.



THE MAN OF ACTION: HUANG HSING.



THE MAN OF IDEALS: SUN YAT SEN.

China had need of all her sons, especially those of lofty aims and self-sacrificing aspirations. And foremost amongst these was the first President.

If in the long period of preparation and abortive effort which preceded the Revolution the courageous Huang Hsing had been pre-eminently the man of action and the literary Sun Chiao Jen the great disseminator of the new doctrines, Sun Yat Sen had above all things been the man of ideals. He was now forty-five years of age. For more than half his life he had been imbued with the ambition to see a new China, freed from oppression and corruption, and revivified by new and purer forces. For seventeen years a proscribed man, a price set upon his head, he had been upheld in the hour of difficulty and danger by a noble picture that was ever before his eyes, a picture of his own painting, in which he saw his ancient country a modern State, powerful and progressive, occupying an honoured place amongst the nations. Above all he saw the poorer and weaker of his countrymen enjoying the inestimable blessings that are supposed to flow from education and representative institutions.

To encompass these ends Dr. Sun had travelled through the countries of the earth, wherever Chinese were to be found, organising outside China that support, both material and moral, of which the Chinese reformer at home, when the time came, would stand in need. On various occasions, it seems, he also penetrated China, in disguise, taking immense risks in what he believed to be the interests of the cause. A hard and dangerous life, if it had its rewards it was not without its many trials and disappointments. Quiet in his methods and self-effacing, he inspired enthusiasm and confidence in those whose support he set out to gain. But in other quarters he had to submit to being regarded as an obscure intriguer, and but few had the prescience to see in him the protagonist of the coming change.

Materials at present are not available, and the time has not yet arrived, to determine the place Sun Yat Sen will occupy in history. Nor is it less difficult to define the part he has played in the Revolution. Even his biographers, for good reasons doubtless, have told little that was not already known to close students of Chinese politics, and have hardly

passed beyond the region of generalities.* It is probable, however, that, unambitious of office and seemingly endowed with the self-sacrifice of the missionary spirit in its highest form, imbued with an almost fanatic zeal and dominated by an unconquerable optimism and a fine belief in the power and desire of his countrymen to respond to the call of higher things, in the future he will play a greater part in the fields of philanthropy and education than in the arena of politics. A theorist, with many of the characteristics of the visionary rather than the cast of mind of the practical politician, his chief title to fame will not unlikely rest on his organisation of forces outside China, and his inspiration of many of those who, unlike himself, were free to come and go in the country. The father of Republican aspirations in China, his great service to the cause was that, no matter by what obstacles opposed, he never allowed the enthusiasms of himself or others, where he could prevent it, to weaken or to die. Looking back, it can now be seen that with the birth of the T'ung Meng Hui in 1905 † almost half the task which he had set himself was accomplished. With the formation of a well-organised society, revolutionism was placed on a broader basis, and henceforth the work in the main must necessarily be with those at home. And as time went on it is probable that Dr. Sun Yat Sen became less the leader, except perhaps in name. He was still the great outside organiser, but in a sense he was less needed by those who were carrying on the work in China, and his connection with the party must inevitably have tended to become more loose. It possibly explains his absence at the time of the outbreak and the difficulty his friends apparently experienced in establishing communication with him.

The point is not perhaps of great importance, but it may be of interest to record two alternative explanations. Dr. Cantlie states that the Revolution broke out several months before its time, hence the absence of Sun Yat Sen. Prominent revolutionaries, on the other hand, have assured the present writer that Dr. Sun was in Europe for the

* "Sun Yat Sen and the Awakening of China," by Dr. Cantlie and C. Sheridan Jones; London, 1912.

† *Vide ante*, at p. 35.

purpose of persuading foreign Governments of the necessity of refusing financial assistance to the Manchus and threatening refusal to accord recognition, when the Republican Government came to power, to any such loans that might be made now.

It is suggested, however, with all respect to the authorities who have put forward these statements, that either explanation should be accepted with great caution. As regards the former, it is true that the Revolution broke out prematurely, but it seems equally clear that it was only a few weeks before its time; while the latter is improbable for many reasons which need not be entered into here, besides which, it makes it hard to understand the difficulty of communication. An additional point of interest that seems to confirm the writer's theory of a somewhat weakened connection is the fact that in the first place the invitation to become President was sent to Dr. Sun by the Canton Republicans, and not from either Shanghai or Wuchang, where the T'ung Meng Hui were strongest. Both of these centres delayed committing themselves, which was hardly the attitude one would expect towards an accepted leader. Finally, there had been a strong desire in more than one quarter to confer the Presidency on men of the moment, such as Li Yuan Hung and Huang Hsing, and in some sections of the revolutionary party there seemed a tendency to forget the services of Sun Yat Sen.

As we have said, however, in another place, it is not wise to attach too much importance to outward and visible manifestations. In China ordinary canons of reasoning do not always apply. Some day these little mysteries will perhaps be made plain, and we shall be able to form a more complete estimate of Sun's position in the revolutionary party. In the meantime, let us record how in the event he came into his kingdom.

Having been elected President, as we have seen, on the 29th of December, the next step was to install him at Nanking and make widespread proclamation.

By a happy coincidence, the inauguration of the new era came with the New Year. Between five and six in the evening of the 1st of January, 1912, Sun Yat Sen arrived at Nanking. Shortly before midnight the booming of guns

announced that the oath had been taken, binding him to the restoration of peace, the establishment of a Government based on the will of the people, and the dethronement of the Manchu ruler. These things accomplished, he solemnly undertook to resign office in order that the people of United China might elect their President.

Having taken the oath of office, President Sun read an address to the Chinese people which was immediately published in the form of a proclamation. Of not sufficient importance to reproduce at length, it derives its chief interest from its uncompromising declaration of the necessity for centralisation and its frank adoption of the policy which had been the keynote of the struggle between Peking and the provinces for many years. "Outlining the method and scope of government proposed for the future," to draw upon the excellent summary by the Nanking correspondent of the *North China Daily News*, "China, said the President, consisted of five peoples—the Chinese, the Manchus, the Mongolians, Tibetans, and Turkestanese—who would form the new country to be known as the United Provinces of China. Prior to the fall of Wuchang, China had been divided by the rule of a despotic section of the Manchu people. Now the main portion of China had been united against that rule and had set up a Government based upon the will of the whole people of all China and the dependencies. It would be the aim of that Government to secure the coherence of all the provinces and dependencies of China, a union in the cause of good government by which the freedom and happiness of the whole people would be secured.

"The future Government of China would be Republican. It was not intended, however, to set up separate Republics or to decentralise or divide the nation, but to bind it together strongly and firmly under a Central Government. The whole system must be based upon unity and nationalism. The army and navy, the fiscal system, education, commerce, and foreign affairs must be directed by one great central machine, in which every province and every man in China should have a voice. The army would be a national army, and not be divided into provincial units."

Referring to other matters, "the financial system of the

country, promised the President, would be readjusted. Tax reform would be one of the first cares of the Government, in order that the burden might be lifted from the shoulders of those unable to bear it.

"With regard to foreign affairs, the President said the country was gratified because of the neutrality maintained by the nations of the world during the present crisis in China, and he thanked them for this assistance. He desired the foreign people to understand that this was not a revolution, but a movement for reform.

"In conclusion the President said he was confident the future course of China would entitle her to a seat at the board of International Council, that the true aims and the true position of this new Government would speedily be recognised by the Powers, and he gave the assurance that the future foreign policy of China would be such as to contribute to the peace of the world."

A manifesto from the Republic of China to all friendly nations shortly followed. It was a characteristic document of some considerable length, and may be said to have represented the last words in the Republican case. To some extent it was, of course, a repetition of the Shanghai manifesto of November, and though expressed in restrained and dignified terms, it was by no means free from criticism on the ground of historical inaccuracy and exaggeration of wrongs at Manchu hands. As a final Republican pronouncement, however, which declared in formal terms and for the last time the irrevocable parting of the ways, which proclaimed undying hatred of the Manchu cause, which made many a fair promise for the future, it has an interest and value that cannot be denied. As an honest expression of belief in the new faith by sincere men it is entitled to our respect. Opinions may differ as to the wisdom of the policy that had been pursued, some so-called Republicans may be justly charged with motives of self-seeking, but let not honour be refused to the men whose sacrifices on the field at Hankow, in the trenches at Hanyang, at Nanking itself, and through the long years of preparation, rendered possible such a consummation at China's ancient capital. The thought that a Republican Government would address the world from Nanking would

not have been entertained a few months before by the boldest of political speculators. Yet this strange thing had come to pass, and the fact was now announced in unequivocal terms.

"Greeting. The hitherto irremediable suppression of the individual qualities and national aspirations of the people having arrested the intellectual, the moral, and the material development of China, the aid of revolution has been invoked to extirpate the primary cause, and we now proclaim the resultant overthrow of the despotic sway yielded by the Manchu Dynasty and the establishment of a Republic.

"The substitution of a Republic for a Monarchical form of Government is not the fruit of a transient passion. It is the natural outcome of a long-cherished desire for broad-based freedom making for permanent contentment and uninterrupted advancement. It is the formal declaration of the will of the Chinese nation.

"We, the Chinese people, are peaceful and law-abiding. We have waged no war except in self-defence. We have borne our grievances during 267 years of Manchu misrule with patience and forbearance. We have by peaceful means endeavoured to redress our wrongs, secure our liberty, and ensure our progress, but we have failed. Oppressed beyond human endurance, we deemed it our inalienable right as our sacred duty to appeal to arms to deliver ourselves and our posterity from the yoke to which we have so long been subjected, and for the first time in our history inglorious bondage has been transformed to an inspiring freedom, splendid with the lustrous light of opportunity.

"The policy of the Manchu Dynasty has been one of unequivocal seclusion and unyielding tyranny. Beneath it we have bitterly suffered, and we now submit to the free peoples of the world the reasons justifying the revolution and the inauguration of our present Government.

"Prior to the usurpation of the Throne by the Manchus the land was open to foreign intercourse and religious tolerance existed, as is evidenced by the writings of Marco Polo and the inscription on the Nestorian tablet of Hsianfu.

"Dominated by ignorance and selfishness, the Manchus closed the land to the outer world and plunged the Chinese people into a state of benighted mentality calculated to operate inversely to their natural talents and capabilities, thus committing a crime against humanity and the civilised nations almost impossible of expiation.

"Actuated by a desire for the perpetual subjugation of the Chinese, by a vicious craving for aggrandisement and wealth, the Manchus governed the country to the lasting injury and detriment of our people, creating privileges and monopolies and erecting about themselves barriers of exclusion in national custom and personal conduct which have been rigorously maintained throughout the centuries.

"They have levied irregular and unwholesome taxes upon us without our consent, have restricted foreign trade to treaty ports, placed likin embargoes upon merchandise transit, and obstructed internal commerce.

"They have retarded the creation of industrial enterprises, rendered impossible the development of natural resources, and wilfully neglected to safeguard vested interests.

"They have denied us a regular system and impartial administration of justice, inflicted unusual and cruel punishment upon all persons charged with offences, whether innocent or guilty, and frequently encroached upon sacred rights without due process of law.

"They have connived at official corruption, sold offices to the highest bidder, and subordinated merit to influence.

"They have repeatedly rejected our most reasonable demands for better government, and have reluctantly conceded pseudo-reforms under most urgent pressure, making promises without intention of fulfilling them, and obstructing efforts towards national elevation.

"They have failed to appreciate the anguishing lessons taught by the foreign Powers in the process of years, and have brought themselves and our people beneath the contempt of the world.

"To remedy these evils and render possible the entrance of China to the Family of Nations we have fought and formed our Government, and lest our good intentions should be misunderstood we now publicly and unreservedly declare the following to be our promises:—

"All treaties entered into by the Manchu Government before the date of the Revolution will be continually effective up to the time of their termination, but any and all entered into after the commencement of the Revolution will be repudiated.

"All foreign loans or indemnities incurred by the Manchu Government before the Revolution will be acknowledged without any alteration of terms, but all payments made to, and loans incurred by, the Manchu Government after the commencement of the Revolution will be repudiated.

"All concessions granted to foreign nations or their nationals by the Manchu Government before the Revolution will be respected, but any and all granted after the commencement of the Revolution will be repudiated.

"All persons and property of any foreign nation within the jurisdiction of the Republic of China will be respected and protected.

"It will be our constant aim and firm endeavour to build upon a stable and enduring foundation a national structure compatible with the potentialities of our long-neglected country.

"We will strive to elevate our people, secure them peace, and legislate for their prosperity.

"To those Manchus who abide peacefully within the limits of our jurisdiction we will accord equality and give protection.

"We will remodel our laws, revise our civil, criminal, commercial, and mining codes, reform our finances, abolish restrictions to trade and commerce, and ensure religious toleration.

"The cultivation of better relations with foreign peoples and Governments will ever be before us. It is our earnest hope that the foreign nations who have been steadfast in sympathy will bind more firmly the bonds of friendship, that they will bear in patience with us the period of trial

confronting us in our reconstructive work, and that they will aid us in the consummation of the far-reaching plans which we are now about to undertake, and which they have so long and so vainly been urging upon the people of this country.

"With this message of peace and goodwill the Republic of China cherishes the hope of being admitted into the Family of Nations not merely to share their *rights* and privileges, but also to co-operate with them in the great and noble task called for in the upbuilding of the civilisation of the world."

CHAPTER XXX

ON THE KNEES OF THE GODS

A GENERAL survey of the situation reveals the fact that the New Year in China, which witnessed the inauguration of the Republic at Nanking, opened on a desperate state of affairs. The Ta Ch'ing Dynasty still occupied the Dragon Throne, and, though weakened, was apparently in a position, for a time at least, to dispute the country from the Yangtze to Peking and northward. South of the great waterway the Republican domination, to all outward seeming, was complete. In Shanghai the negotiations for a settlement had reached a deadlock. At Wuchang further and unnecessary fighting had taken place. Whether news of the renewal of the armistice expiring on the 30th of December, which had been arranged by Wu Ting Fang and T'ang Shao Yi in Shanghai on the 29th of December, had not reached the Republican army or they were beyond control, is not known. The fact remains that the Republican troops delivered a surprise attack on the Imperialists' position, which caused a revival of the bitter feelings of the earlier campaign. To the minds of the Imperialist soldiers, who were under strict orders as a consequence of the renewal of the armistice, it presented itself as a grossly treacherous action, designed to recapture the lost Republican positions. It was with difficulty they were restrained from retaliation, and the feeling aroused could not easily be assuaged. The distant province of Shensi was in a state of chaos. In the prevailing disorder the lawless characters saw their opportunity, and preyed relentlessly upon the countryside. Even in Tientsin the peace was seriously threatened by a party of manufacturers and throwers of bombs, while just outside Shanhaikuan, where the railway pierces the Great Wall, a bridge had been

blown up by some undetected agency. In Lanchow, in Chihli, already famous in the history of the Revolution, a new revolt had occurred. Three regiments of the 20th Division, whose demands under General Chang had forced the grant of the Constitution, had seen fit to declare themselves Republican. It was some days before the Imperial troops regained control by means of a portion of the 3rd Division, which was hurriedly entrained for the scene. During this time rail communication between Peking and the sea had been blocked, and as a result the Powers determined to occupy the railway between Peking and Shanhaikuan, in accordance with their rights under the Protocol concluded in 1901 after the Boxer disturbances.* The state of the country at large was scarcely better. Finally, large tracts of country were devastated by one of the worst famines experienced for several years. In many parts of the valley of the Yangtze huge portions of the previous year's crops had been destroyed by flood. Nor was the state of affairs, though less known, any better in the belt of country that stretches between Chinanfu in Shantung along the Yellow River to the centre of Honan. Already in the autumn piteous tales had come in of terrible distress, of deserted villages, of people trying to sustain life with grass and weeds and the bark of trees, and even in more favoured spots of rapidly emptying granaries.

From a purely human point of view the situation was a terrible one. Foreign effort was able to render some assistance in the stricken areas, but their very immensity rendered it impossible to touch much more than the fringe of the problem, while the authorities on either side had neither opportunity nor means to grapple with the terrible spectre of famine that had cast its shadow over the land.

Nor was the political outlook on the surface much more

* At the time of the outbreak at Wuchang the following foreign troops, approximately, were stationed in North China, partly at Peking as Legation guards and partly at Tientsin, Tangku, Chinwangtao, and Shanhaikuan: Austrian, 42; British, 1,880; French, 1,050; Italian, 240; Japanese, 500; Russian, 30; United States, 160. A few days after the outbreak the British garrison was reinforced by the Somersetshire Light Infantry. This regiment relieved the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, who, however, were recalled an hour or two after their departure en route for India. At a later stage most other powers increased their numbers from their respective bases in eastern waters.



An unexplained explosion outside Shanhaikuan in January, 1912



One of the Pontoon Bridges constructed by the Imperialists during the attack on Hanyang.

promising. There could be discerned, however, beneath the elements of conflict and doubt which overlay them, three things which made for peace—the lack of funds, the Manchu distrust of Yuan Shih K'ai, and the latter's peculiar position. Neither side was in possession of any substantial amount of funds. Sun Yat Sen had brought some relief, but it was rapidly absorbed, and the Nanking Republic was sorely pressed to meet the requirements of government. The Premier in Peking was rather better off, though still in great straits. He could command the surplus revenues of the Peking-Mukden and Peking-Hankow railways, which, with the Peking-Kalgan railway, could also be used to secure substantial advances on future freight, which was now offering on advantageous terms. The Manchus also had wealth with which demands might possibly be met. The Palace had disgorged a substantial sum during November, but for the moment it was not probable that more would be forthcoming, or that the Imperial Princes would subscribe very liberally. From the commencement of the campaign, as has been recorded, many of them had distrusted Yuan Shih K'ai. The course pursued by T'ang Shao Yi, notwithstanding the Premier's disclaimer, only increased their doubts. Though they would probably pay to preserve existence, if the doom of the Dynasty was already sealed there was no reason why money should be spent either in postponing or, as they thought possible in their distrust of Yuan, in expediting it. Finally, the position of Yuan Shih K'ai caused men to rely on him as the ultimate hope. The Republicans would not fight except to expel the Manchus. They at least must go. But, once accomplished, the wiser amongst their leaders, apart from realising that Yuan Shih K'ai must be assigned a suitable part, could only recognise in him an asset of the greatest worth.

Regarded from one standpoint, it might be said that the chief hope lay in this state of affairs, which must enforce somehow or another an early compromise. On the other hand, it might perhaps be said that it was the chief evil in that it prevented a long campaign, which, painful though it must be while it lasted, would probably make in the long run for a more permanent adjustment of political institutions on more stable lines.

But though as a matter of abstract reasoning it seemed that a compromise was inevitable, the situation passed through so many phases that it was difficult to arrive at the conviction that the outcome was assured.

When T'ang Shao Yi resigned, Dr. Wu Ting Fang requested Yuan himself to come to Shanghai, or that another representative should be appointed. But Yuan refused to pursue either of these courses, and insisted that negotiations should be carried on directly by telegraph.

The position of the peace negotiations at this time may be briefly stated thus: Both parties had agreed that the question of the form of government should be referred to a National Convention. The only point in dispute was as to the method in which it should be convened. Dr. Wu Ting Fang, it will be recalled, had made a proposal involving the holding of the Convention on the 8th of January. Mr. T'ang had been induced to accept this proposal. But even the most advanced sympathiser with Republican aspirations could scarcely regard it as otherwise than calculated to produce farcical results as far as popular representation was concerned. The ideas of Yuan Shih K'ai, on the other hand, were scarcely less open to criticism. He proposed an elaborate electoral scheme which must have postponed for an impossibly long time the decision of the question. A break ensued, on the occurrence of which Wu Ting Fang fell back on the contention that T'ang Shao Yi had full powers, and that the Imperial Government was bound by his agreement.

The free exchange of telegrams apparently did nothing to relieve the situation, and beyond the extension of the armistice to 8 a.m. on Monday the 29th of January, and mutual recriminations on the failure of the troops to observe the terms of armistice, more than half the month elapsed before any further progress seemed to be accomplished. As will in due course be seen, however, events had been developing rapidly beneath the surface.

In the meantime the young Republic at Nanking was grappling with the problems of government. A Cabinet had been formed containing the names of some we already know, of others to whom we shall have to refer again, and of others who are only known by their services at Nanking, which

brought them for a brief period into the public eye. Dr. Wu Ting Fang became the Minister of Justice, Huang Hsing the Minister of War; Chen Chin Tao accepted the portfolio of Finance, the Ministry in which he had so persistently refused to serve in the Government of Premier Yuan. The younger school of the revolutionists, for the most part an inexperienced band of successful schoolsmen and brilliant theorists, were abundantly represented, and not least worthily by Wang Chung Hui, a graduate of Yale and a student of legal institutions in Germany and England. Dr. Wang was entrusted with the direction of Foreign Affairs. Home Affairs, the Navy, Communications, Education, and Industry severally were placed in the charge of Chen Teh Chuan, Commander Huang Chung Yin, T'ang Shou Chien, T'sai Yuan Pei, and Chang Chien, all men who had deserved well of the Republic, and, with few exceptions, already well known, were destined to achieve greater prominence.

While the leaders were thus organising themselves into a Provisional Government, the inauguration of the new Republic was being celebrated by the soldiery in a way that showed the looseness of their discipline and incensed the people. For several weeks the keen adherents of the cause of republicanism in the South had been shedding their queues. It was a form of declaration of independence, for the queue, adoption of which, together with the half-shaven head, came from Manchuria and had been imposed by the Manchus on their ascent of the Dragon Throne, primarily, it is said, with the object of enabling them to distinguish opponents from adherents in the campaigns that were still being waged in different parts of the country to complete their conquest, was in many Chinese eyes the badge of servitude. In Shanghai in this connection Republican enthusiasts, presumably of the baser sort, had already been guilty of many absurdities and excesses. After the manner of mobs the world over, this not very responsible section of the party had sought to impose their view in the matter of discarding the queue on all and sundry. Respectable citizens who were not disposed to change the habits of a lifetime, or who saw no need to evidence a political change by an inconvenient change of clothes and hairdressing, were frequently forced to conform to the prejudices of the new school.

Bands of exuberant youths of Republican sentiments would embark on extensive campaigns of queue-cutting extraordinary, and their outrages remained unchecked. Some of them even went the length of visiting the foreign settlements and operating on coachmen, chauffeurs, and others in foreign employ, until it was brought home to them that this was a thing which foreign Shanghai could not tolerate, however deeply their sympathies might be engaged on the Republican side.

In Nanking, apparently, men had been slow to discard this so-called badge of servitude, and it seems to have occurred to the troops that it would mark in a suitable manner the inauguration of the new regime if queues in great abundance could be removed. The result was they paraded the streets in bands armed with shears and operated promiscuously. None were too old, none too young, none too rich, none too poor to receive these unwelcome attentions. Irrespective of age and station, men were subjected to the humiliation of being made publicly to conform with the rude ideas of the mob. Nor did the Republican Government seem to make any attempt to check such scandalous proceedings. The truth was that they were unable to oppose the soldiers. Their control was lax, and they were confronted by many far more serious problems.

It will be remembered that one of the first measures of the Shanghai revolutionaries had been to abolish taxation. Unwise and shortsighted though it was, how such a proposal came to be made is easily comprehended. It represented, of course, an attempt to buy popular favour at a time when no price seemed too high to pay in order to secure the backing of the country. But it was sowing the seeds of grave trouble. In Shanghai the immediate needs of the Provisional Government were met by public subscriptions, which in the first wave of enthusiasm came in on not ungenerous lines. At a later stage, when voluntary effort failed, calls were made on wealthy citizens, many outrages being committed to enforce contribution. At least one rich banker was kidnapped in the foreign settlement itself, and only restored to liberty for fear of foreign complications. But there were many in the early days who could not thus evade the stern hand of the young

Republic, which laid heavy toll on her more prosperous sons.

Such means of replenishing the exchequer could not fail to become unpopular, and must in time produce such a sense of insecurity as to threaten the existence of any party, and annihilate all hope of a satisfactory outcome. That time had arrived when Dr. Sun Yat Sen was installed in Nanking. Already there existed widespread uncertainty and doubt as to the future, and many citizens of the sound merchant class, who had hitherto contrived to escape the Republican impositions, had removed themselves and their families to the safe haven of the foreign Concessions.

Moreover, it was desirable that a Government seeking foreign recognition should find some other method to fill its coffers than by the system of what had been euphemistically described as forced loans.

But with the end of voluntary contribution virtually in sight, with the foreign markets closed to them through the restrictions of the self-imposed neutrality of the Powers, with the tax-gathering machinery dislocated and the impression abroad amongst the people that a republic stood for an Elysium in which taxes found no place,* it is difficult to see what other course was open to them. To delay was to court disaster. Every day the position south of the Yangtze was becoming a more serious one. The soldiers were threatening to get out of hand and the cities were trembling on the brink of chaos. In the meantime the funds which Sun Yat Sen had brought with him, to the temporary relief of the financial stringency, were rapidly becoming exhausted. When they were finished might be expected the deluge.

Two things thus stood out clearly. In the first place something had to be done quickly. Secondly, except for the support of Chinese in foreign countries the Republican Government could only look for money at home, which meant of course the forced loan. By this time, however,

* A delightful and somewhat significant story in this connection comes from the interior. When the attempt was made to reimpose taxation, it was argued that on the foundation of the Ta Ch'ing Dynasty the event had been celebrated by the Manchus by a remission of three years' taxation, and that a precedent had been created which must now be followed. Otherwise there was no point in overthrowing the Manchus!

private wealth had become extraordinarily elusive, and it would be easier to determine on such a policy than to apply it with great results.

The difficulty was met, or at least proposed to be met, by a scheme of considerable ingenuity. In the days when levies were being freely made by the Shanghai Revolutionaries, the rich corporation known as the China Merchants' Steam Navigation Company had been threatened with a demand for a not unsubstantial contribution. Nor was it forgotten, though at that time it appears that no calls were actually made, that many of the foremost industrial enterprises in China were situated in the Central and Southern Provinces, and so were within the Republican jurisdiction, or, more properly perhaps, control. On these enterprises an extensive scheme of forced loans was now proposed.

It was not probable, of course, that in the economic state of the country large sums in cash, which were required to pay troops, would be forthcoming, but it occurred to some astute Republican mind that there was nothing in the stringent principles of neutrality which had been applied to prevent private institutions from borrowing from abroad on such security as they had to offer. As a result one by one the great commercial and industrial enterprises of Central and Southern China came into the loan market. The undertaking of the China Merchants' Steam Navigation Company was offered as security for ten million taels, or nearly a million and a half sterling. The Kiangsu Railway Company, which as a provincial concern operating with provincial funds had built the Kiangsu section of the Shanghai-Hangchow-Ningpo railway, ignoring the financial arrangements made by the Central Government with the British and Chinese Corporation, offered their section for three million taels. The Chekiang section came into the market on similar terms, while the attempt was made to raise ten million taels on the completed portion of the Kuangtung section of the Hankow-Canton railway. In the meanwhile it was credibly reported that Sheng Hsüan Huai, who had found his way from his refuge in Tsingtao to Japan, had been also engaged on an extensive deal. Largely interested in the Hanyang Iron and Steel Works, the Tayeh Iron Mines, and the Pinghsiang Coal Mines, the

three enterprises combined under the name of the Han-Yeh-Ping Corporation, he was inviting Japanese capitalists to finance their further development. Sheng's aim, of course, was to secure his property from confiscation, and the price of immunity was stated on reliable authority to be a contribution of five million taels to the Republican Treasury. Another available proposition was that of the Tung-kuanshan Copper Mines, which, originally forming the subject of a concession grant to Sir John Lister Kaye, had been restored to the Chinese, under diplomatic pressure, for a relatively small sum by way of compensation which could hardly have been arrived at on business principles.

Such were the chief enterprises through the medium of which the Republican Government proposed to replenish its depleted exchequer. But in the event the end in view proved less easy of attainment than had been supposed. On the one hand, it was difficult to place loans either in Europe or America, owing to deficient information, doubt as to how far these so-called private business operations would receive Government support should the necessity arise, and lack of confidence in the various securities. On the other hand, it was undesirable to subject so many Chinese enterprises to the risk of control by the Japanese, who were the only people in a position to assess the industrial and commercial value of the opportunities which offered. Ultimately, however, recourse to Japanese financiers became unavoidable, and there was for a time great prospect of a substantial increase of Japan's commercial and industrial interests in China.*

While efforts were thus being made to satisfy the financial requirements of the situation, military preparations were being pushed forward on a considerable scale. Although there was talk of peace, Republican troops were being massed at several points in readiness to march on Peking.

The situation was at first sight a little curious, but from the Republican standpoint the policy was thoroughly intelligible. The election of Sun Yat Sen and the formation of the Nanking Government were events of substantial

* The complications which would have ensued were avoided, as political developments made it unnecessary to mature most of these propositions, which, negotiated very privately, aroused public, and in some cases, official protest, as soon as they became known.

moral import. They indicated clearly that the Republican leaders intended to carry through their plans without loss of time, and, alive both to the advantages of a determined front and to the dangers that attend waiting on the results of negotiation, they hurried on their arrangements with the intention of delivering an ultimatum and supporting it, if required, in the necessary force.

With this object in view the Republican Generals made the following dispositions, though how they reconciled them with the terms of the existing armistice is not quite clear. Dividing the troops at their disposal into six columns, the first was to operate from Wuchang in three divisions. One division, utilising the railway, was to proceed from Hankow and engage the Imperialist troops, who had now been induced to retire from their positions at Kilometre Ten and Hanyang to a point several miles to the north. Another division was to be dispatched up the Han to Hsiangyang and thence to make a detour and strike the line in the rear of the Imperialist forces. The last and third division was to advance by way of Yanglo and Huangpi and to operate in the other direction, taking the Imperialist troops on their left flank. It was assumed that these manœuvres would effectually dispose of all Imperialist resistance to the march northward. In the meantime No. 2 Column, in two sections, to be drawn respectively from the two western provinces of Shensi and Shansi, would have converged on the Peking-Hankow railway with the object of effecting a junction with No. 1 Column and moving together on Peking.

While these operations would be taking place from the base of the Yangtze in Central China, a similar movement was planned to take place in the Eastern provinces from the bases at Nanking and Nganking. The immediate objective here would be to crush General Chang Hsün, who, on the fall of Nanking, had retired northward, eventually establishing his headquarters at Hsüchoufu in Shantung. He had already prepared the way for his retirement, it will be remembered, by holding Pukou in force, and even while Nanking was still held by the Imperialists there had been fighting along the railway from the 27th to the 29th, and again on the 30th of November, with small forces of revolutionary troops who had worked their way across country.

Since that time, regardless of armistices, there had been a certain amount of skirmishing, but nothing worthy of record. General Chang Hsün was sitting still, awaiting the threatened revolutionary advance and keeping the line open to Peking. To effect General Chang's dislodgment when the time for action came, the Republicans proposed to dispatch No. 3 Column from Nanking to move on General Chang's position at Hsüchoufu along the Tientsin-Pukou railway and the Grand Canal. Another column would march from Nganking to move on Hsüchoufu from the west, while a fifth column would be dispatched by sea to Chefoo, under orders to march across Shantung to Chinanfu and take the Imperialists in the rear. Operating in such force, the Republican leaders supposed that General Chang Hsün would not oppose any serious obstacle to the march on Peking.

The sixth and last column was destined for transport to Chinwangtao, the nearest port for Lanchow, where the troops had recently made an attempt to revolt, and which presented a convenient point from which to move from the east on Peking.

Such, in brief, were the elaborate dispositions whereby, having disposed of all opposition by the way, no less than six columns of Republican troops were to join forces in a last assault on the home of the ancient order. But how these intricate concerted movements would have worked out in practice was not given to the world to see. Before the time arrived to put them into operation, at least in their entirety, the situation had entered upon another phase.

While these preparations were being made and negotiations apparently still failing to advance matters, the world was startled by the news of an attempt on the 16th of January on the life of Yuan Shih K'ai. Yuan had been to the Palace, and on his way home a bomb was thrown from the upper story of a tea-shop in the Wang Fu Kung Ta Chieh, more commonly known to foreigners as Morrison Street, through being the place of residence of the well-known correspondent of *The Times*,* a short distance from the Imperial city.

* At the beginning of August Dr. Morrison, reported on the eve of retirement from *The Times*, was offered and accepted the important appointment of political adviser to the President, a position in which his

The determined nature of the attempt may be gathered from the following account, which is mainly based on that appearing in *Le Journal de Pekin*, a French newspaper edited in the capital:—

At the corner of the Ting Tze Chieh (street) and the Wang Fu Kung Ta Chieh is a small restaurant. As usual, the upper room was occupied by a number of patrons. Two among them appeared to pay little attention to their meal. They had near them three packages, and they seemed to be greatly interested by the spectacle outside, which for the others had no interest. They took seats near the window, and were observed to be watching in the direction of the Tung Hua Men, behind which is the Imperial Palace.

Soon the one who was on the lookout signed to his comrade, who immediately joined him. At this instant the cavalcade surrounding the Premier's carriage made its appearance at the gate. The two men each took up one of the packages they had placed near them, and opened the window as if to get a better view.

The Premier's escort now approached. One could already see his carriage, and it was noticed that he was calmly smoking a cigarette, apparently taking no notice of the spectacle in the street. The little procession now arrived at the corner of Wang Fu Kung Ta Chieh. Already the first horseman had turned to the right and entered this street when an explosion occurred immediately behind the Premier's carriage and slightly to his left. The Premier's horses reared, and breaking into a mad gallop, dashed across the road and down a lane opposite, never stopping until they reached the Waiwupu (Foreign Office).* The Premier was not hurt. The bomb had missed its mark, and, after the manner of bombs, had done its work on the unoffending persons who had the misfortune to be in its neighbourhood. Bursting on the road, the bomb severely wounded two horsemen, three civilians, and three horses, while several other persons were slightly injured. One of the horses fell immediately, and after a final spasm, died. Its body, when examined shortly afterwards, only showed traces of superficial wounds. Lying under the horse was its rider, who showed no signs of life. Another horseman, unhorsed, and with a shattered arm, was stretched on the ground, while his horse, wounded and losing blood, went off at a mad gallop in the direction of the Legation quarter. It fell

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great experience and sound judgment should be able to be utilised to the great benefit of China.

* The Premier, on first arriving in Peking, had taken up his residence at his house in the Hsila Hut'ung, which has been sometimes called the Park Lane of Peking; it is celebrated also as the Hut'ung (lane) in which was the Fu or Palace where the famous Empress-Dowager Tzu Hsi first saw the light. Latterly Yuan had removed to the Waiwupu, a large modern stone building, where he could be more effectively guarded and would be under the same roof with his work.

and expired just in front of the office of the Telegraph Administration. A third horse likewise bolted in its panic, and its body was subsequently recovered in Ketteler Street.* Its rider, who fell at the moment of the explosion, was lifted up by his comrades, but died a little later. Lastly, on the sidewalk near the restaurant three persons groaned in their death agony. One of these was a ground-nuts merchant, another was a peddler, and the third was a coolie who was passing when the bomb was thrown. Several other persons were wounded, and were taken into neighbouring shops, where their needs were attended to.

Only one bomb exploded, though two were thrown from the first-floor window by the persons already mentioned.

At the moment of the explosion there was naturally a great panic. As soon as the Premier's escort started to rejoin his carriage the police and soldiers who were lining the route went to the assistance of their comrades. The crowd fled in terror, and the neighbourhood was soon completely deserted, save for the occupants of the restaurant.

Several police, led by an officer of Yuan Shih K'ai's escort, quickly entered the restaurant to arrest the authors of the outrage, near whom they discovered six other bombs. The two assassins were immediately taken to the nearest police post. They both looked extremely pale, but made no effort to flee. One could see that they had foreseen the consequences of their act, and that they had faced them without fear.

When questioned, one of the men stated that he came from Kueichow, and the other said that he was a Chihli man. It is probable that they will be executed immediately.†

Yuan was extraordinarily calm at the moment of the explosion. According to an eye-witness, he did not even drop the cigarette which was between his lips. When the result of the attempt was communicated to him, he expressed particular regret at the death of a member of his escort who had been seven years in his service. The death of this humble man, indeed, contained all the elements of tragedy. He had obtained a day's leave for the purpose of meeting his family, who were arriving at Peking that afternoon. When he learned, however, that Yuan was paying a visit to the Palace, always a hazardous proceeding in these disturbed times, he forewent his domestic pleasures, deciding that his place was by his master's side.

It would be an interesting, if useless, speculation to attempt to picture the course events might have taken had Yuan Shih K'ai never been in the political arena. It is probable that the situation would have been less complex. The issue would have been in a sense more clear-cut. The Manchus would have had a more simple course to steer.

* Named after Baron von Ketteler, the German Minister to China, who was wounded on his way to the old Tsungli Yamen at the commencement of the Boxer rising.

† They were strangled next day.

On the other hand, there must have been an internecine strife until one or other of the factions in the State had been either expelled or suppressed. But Yuan introduced a third element. He had no reason to love the Manchus, but he believed that a monarchical government would be best suited to China's needs. Once more he stood for compromise, the great characteristic of his country's methods as of his own mind. He was prepared to fight for this ideal up to a certain point, but, as events in Central China seemed to indicate, he was not willing to embark the country on a long campaign of civil war. With a strong element of conservatism in his nature, he was of progressive mind, and recognised the strength of the forces which were arrayed against him.

Yuan Shih K'ai in his own person offered various alternative solutions, and at different times he was credited with entertaining all of them. At one time it was said that he would uphold the Manchus, and under the ægis of their nominal rule himself govern the country. At another time he was accused of aspiring to the Imperial Yellow. Finally, that he aimed to be President of a Chinese Republic, a consummation of the present troubles which his friends freely prophesied for him.

How far Yuan's influence could have succeeded in moulding events to either of these ends, according to his own purely personal predilections, or may yet do so if he be the opportunist his critics declare, cannot now be determined. Probably the strength of his position was not underestimated. But if there was room for distrust, his immense importance to the nation had become manifest. Thoughtful men of all shades of opinion saw in him the only solution of the profound crisis that had been reached. They realised that it would have been a national calamity had the attempt on his life not failed. Even if he were dominated in the main by personal ambition, a thing hard indeed to believe, it happened to march with the best interests of the State. For the time being, and probably for long in the future, the one strong hand afforded the chief hope.

And in the meantime events were gradually working together to produce a situation in which this desideratum promised to be largely attained. Though to all outward

appearances the deadlock produced by T'ang Shao Yi's resignation on January 2nd, or at least the events which caused it, had remained till the middle of the month, in point of fact considerable advance had been made towards a settlement. It was evident that the Manchu regime was doomed. It was clear that the debate as to the method of calling into existence a National Convention to determine the form of the future Government would be troublesome and involve great waste of time. It was generally believed, too, that the outcome of any reference to the country at large, dominated as it was by political wire-pullers, was assured.

No one seems to have realised this more clearly than Dr. Wu Ting Fang, who, it will be remembered, had commenced negotiations on the basis of Manchu abdication. It has been recorded how the Republican delegates had come to the Peace Conference at Shanghai with the fixed idea of a Republican Government as the only possible outcome, and for a long time had refused to discuss a settlement on any other basis. Only as a great concession did they agree to a National Convention, and then only on such terms as would have made of the proposed Convention the merest farce. It was clearly a concession granted merely to enable the Manchus to retire with dignity. But it was too obvious to succeed, and when the playing of this dignified farce was found impracticable, Dr. Wu and his friends ignored recent developments and reverted to the old position. Early in January terms of abdication were offered to the Court through the medium of the Cabinet and Yuan Shih K'ai, and it was said that Yuan was on his way from a conference at the Palace on the subject of the terms offered to the Imperial Clan when his life was attempted. Generally speaking, however, his attitude on this question was one of aloofness. He felt it to be a question for the Court itself to decide. All he asked for was money to carry on the Government and to pay the army. Beyond the satisfaction of these requirements he had no demands, and was understood to have adopted the attitude of awaiting instructions.

The Palace party was divided into two camps. On the one side were the more cautious counsels of the older Princes, on

the other the young and fiery advocates of a firm stand, in which they were supported by the Mongol Princes. These latter, the direct descendants of the warrior prince Genghis Khan, had, indeed, already committed themselves formally against the Republican principle in a letter which they had addressed to Dr. Wu Ting Fang.

"Against bad government," they wrote, "you have started a revolution, and we Mongolians have been very enthusiastic over your cause. We hope that you, as patriotic sons of China, will keep within limits and work only for the welfare of the country. But your recent conduct violates your original object, and ceases to command the respect of the world. Instead of uplifting the country you endanger its people, sadly disappointing our great expectations.

"The world is closely watching the Revolution. It behoves you to act uprightly and unselfishly. The old Government, corrupt and misled, has been thoroughly upset by you, and your work is praiseworthy. Since the outbreak at Wuchang three months ago, the Cabinet administered by Imperial Princes has been abolished, nineteen articles making unusual constitutional concessions have been granted. The original object of the Revolution is fulfilled, and the world is looking forward to the restoration of peace.

"But you seem to have learnt only to progress, not to retreat, to commence, not to make an end. Strong to destroy, you are weak to reconstruct. The people are groaning under the evils of war, but you pay no heed. The Throne has repented and reformed, but you are bent on its abolition. So long as the war is raging, so long the people are suffering disorder and destruction.

"It is obvious that a Republican Government is impracticable in China. Even in the Southern provinces, which are under revolutionary influence, the people have untold grievances. Life and property are destroyed daily. Popular indignation is at its height, but the people dare not demonstrate it, in fear of the tyrannical Revolutionary Government.

"You are considered civilised and standing for good government. But why should you organise a Republican Government pending the convocation of a National Assembly, and invade Hanyang during the Armistice? The Government is condemned, for it was corrupt and cruel. But the Revolutionary Government does not prove any better. Under the cloak of Republicanism you have instituted a tyrannical regime.

"Is the Republic for China Proper (the eighteen provinces) or for the whole Empire? If it is for the latter, Mongolia and Tibet, which form a large part of it, are not only still destitute of Republican conceptions, but are strongly pro-monarchical. They firmly oppose the adoption of a Republic. They will sever from the Empire when the old Government is gone, and this will mean the dismemberment of China."

The older Manchu Princes, as has been said, were found on the other side. They saw that though for some years they might exercise a precarious hold over the North, their ultimate expulsion was only a matter of time. The trouble had spread too far. They could never reconquer the South, and with anarchist principles abroad, and persons able and willing to throw bombs, they would never have known any peace. With them was the Empress-Dowager. She had undertaken, it was said, when Yuan had come to Peking in the month of November, to be guided by him in all things. Though Yuan at this juncture professed not to advise, he could not conceal his opinion.

Thus the matter stood. For nearly three weeks, a long time in a period of crisis, Palace conferences took place daily, and feeling between the two sections all the time ran higher.

In the meantime another complication had arisen. The Republicans claimed that in anticipation of abdication they had invited Yuan Shih Ka'i to assume the position of Provisional President of the Republic. Yuan, it was said, had agreed to accept when a certain new demand had been introduced by him, namely, that the Republican Government at Nanking should be dissolved within forty-eight hours of the abdication. This demand was construed as indicating an intention to ignore the Republican Government at Nanking, and supersede it by a new Provisional Government, to be formed by Yuan acting independently, whereas the Republicans considered that the Nanking Government should be confirmed and adopted as the Provisional Government, the only change, subject to a certain amount of necessary reconstruction in order to strengthen the Ministry, being the substitution of Yuan Shih K'ai as Provisional President in the place of Sun Yat Sen. Any other course, it was urged, would provide no guarantee for a Republican future. Yuan himself, however, denied that he had discussed the matter, either directly or indirectly, stating that "he had never harboured any ambition to be the President of the Chinese Republic, nor had he ever hinted at such an intention throughout the negotiations with the Revolutionary Government,

much less that he should wrangle for the Presidency. His policy was to maintain the integrity of the whole Empire. He was ready to accept almost any kind of solution so long as peace was gained, and he had no fear as to the security and peace of the country if they were the fruit of reason, truth, and justice."

Material does not exist for making an authoritative statement as to the merits of this difference. Yuan's statement may be correct, and he conceivably may have been the victim of officious friends seeking to force his hand. On the other hand, it may have been a State necessity for the Premier to place on record this denial, or perhaps essential to his own personal safety and position that he should take steps to safeguard himself against a charge of intrigue and disloyalty to the Manchus. Conditions had once more undergone a kaleidoscopic change. Dr. Sun Yat Sen's statement to the foreign Press had been made on the 20th of January, his telegram to Dr. Wu was dated January 22nd, and the Nanking Government statement was issued three days later. Yuan's reply was published on the 30th, and, as will be seen in the next chapter, during these ten days much had occurred.

It is not easy to explain a position that is open to two constructions, but fortunately in the present instance it does not appear material. Assuming the Nanking contention to be the correct one, though Yuan certainly failed to accord to the Nanking point of view the recognition to which it was justly entitled, it does not appear to follow that his action was open to serious censure or criticism on other grounds. He could not be blinded to the fact that in the solution that was rapidly becoming inevitable he must play a great part. The responsibility on his shoulders was immense. He must look ahead and make provision for contingencies, even though they involved his personal aggrandisement. If such action suggests the passion for the gratification of selfish ambition, yet it is also compatible with that largeness and courageousness of mind which associates itself with the highest order of patriotism. The alternatives were to induce the Manchus to resort once more to arms, or, recognising the inevitable or waiting till it came, to retire into private life and deprive the country of his services at the time it most sorely needed them.

CHAPTER XXXI

YUAN'S LAST CARD

THE period of Manchu vacillation seemed to come to an end on Thursday, the 25th January. The period of armistice was to expire at 8 a.m. on the following Monday. It would not be strictly accurate to say that a resumption of hostilities was feared, for at many points they had never really ceased. Rather it was that as long as there was a pretence of a truce and negotiations of a sort were proceeding, it was felt there was a better chance of a peaceful issue than if hostilities were officially resumed. In the meantime, however, the sands were running out and the attitude of the Throne was still indeterminate.

But before this date was to arrive the position of the Throne was to be made tolerably clear, by the issue, on the 25th, of the following Imperial Decree:—

"Since the inception of trouble in Wu-Han,* We have been loth to see Our subjects plunged into a state of misery. We have therefore, with the advice of the Tzu Cheng Yuan, adopted a very conciliatory attitude and repeatedly issued Decrees expressing Our desire not to suppress the revolution by sheer military force. With the advice and mediation of a friendly Power and for the sake of humanity an armistice was arranged, peace negotiation brought about, and Peace Delegates sent to Shanghai to discuss terms. The opinion of the majority is that the form of Government should be decided by a National Convention, an opinion in which the members of the Imperial Family fully concur. We have, therefore, issued a Decree adopting the proposal and leave the question at issue to the National Convention. We submitted to all this as a compromise in order that a peaceful solution may be brought about as We desire. Recently, however, various rumours have been afloat and the people have been much disturbed. As the people are liable to be misled misunderstanding may ensue. Now that the question of calling

* Wuchang and the Han cities, Hanyang and Hankow.

a National Convention is under discussion it is of paramount importance that the people should not be misled. The Yamens concerned are hereby ordered to inculcate the soldiers and people not to believe in and circulate unfounded rumours in order that peace and order may be secured."

But so far had the idea of submitting the issue to a National Convention receded to the backs of men's minds that the appearance of this Edict created a profound effect. Theoretically defensible as it was for the Manchus to take their stand on the principle of a reference to the country which had been mutually agreed upon, the subsequent Republican return to their original frank proposal of immediate Manchu abdication, in conjunction with the fact that negotiations on this basis had already proceeded some considerable distance, caused a sinister intention to be read into the Imperial utterance. Time now was of the first importance, and under present conditions the Republican Government at Nanking could scarcely survive the interminable delays that would result from the elaboration of an electoral scheme and putting it into operation. In all the circumstances the Edict amounted to a declaration of war. Universally interpreted as a refusal to abdicate and a direct challenge to the Republican Government at Nanking, it was supposed that the party in the Palace which had been urging a strong stand had at last gained the upper hand. Rumour was rife to the effect that Chao Erh Hsun, the Viceroy at Mukden, and one of the few strong men in the Manchu ranks, had been secretly recalled to Peking, to undertake with Tieh Liang the task of maintaining *vi et armis* the attitude which had been taken up. The position of Yuan Shih K'ai promised to become more difficult and precarious than before. Tieh Liang was his ancient enemy. In some quarters it was said that he had been really responsible for Yuan's downfall three years previously. Certain it is that at least he strongly supported the Regent's policy on that occasion. It was also believed that Tieh Liang had opposed Yuan's recent recall and would not be deterred by any scruples in encompassing his disappearance from the stage once more.

That the Imperial decision to wait for the National

Convention, with all that it implied, might be interpreted as an attempt incidentally to lower the prestige and weaken the position of Yuan Shih K'ai, who had been striving for a peaceful solution, seems to have been appreciated by the Palace party. But that such an impression should gain ground, however near the mark it might be, was not desirable at the present juncture. Consequently we find an attempt being made to counteract any such feeling. By an Imperial Decree issued on the 26th, the day after this declaration of policy, a rank roughly equivalent to an English Marquisate, a rare honour, was bestowed on Yuan Shih K'ai.

This somewhat obvious device, however, did little to restore the public confidence, and even in the best informed quarters there was entertained but little hope of a peaceful solution just yet. Nor if it were intended as an indication to Yuan Shih K'ai of the greatness that awaited him, and so represented a last attempt to secure his whole-hearted co-operation, was it any more successful.* The honour was refused and the opportunity taken by Yuan to place on record his position in the form of a Memorial. The result was an interesting résumé of the course of the Revolution.

The following dignified translation of this document by "A Student of Chinese" appeared in *The Times*, with whose permission it is now reproduced :—

"As I knelt to receive your mandate I was sorely afraid. I recall that I have received hereditary favour from the Throne, and have repeatedly been accorded marks of its signal approbation. At the outbreak of the Revolution I was again appointed to a viceroyalty, and was placed in supreme command of the troops. Afterwards, on the Cabinet being formed, I was appointed Prime Minister. Confronted by recurring difficulties, and grieving at my failure to redeem the situation, I have been unable to accomplish the smallest result after the lapse of months.

"The dynasty is crumbling into dust, and the people's love is in fragments like a potsherd. The body politic is smitten with a murrain, and

* The Throne was more fortunate in other attempts to reward services. General Feng Kuo Chang, the victor of Hanyang, had received a rank equivalent to that of an English Baron, while General Chiang Kuei Ti, commanding old-style troops, who had rendered services in maintaining order in Peking, was privileged to wear the once coveted "Yellow Riding Jacket" and to be created the last "Junior Guardian of the Heir Apparent."

no cure for its distemper can be found. Like Shih Ko Fa, the last Ming Commander-in-Chief, I am destitute of a fraction of recorded merit, and my guilt knows no desert save death. I now beg to recount to your Majesty the perplexities under which I have laboured since taking office.

"At first the Revolution was military in character. It spread to the official class and to the rest of the population. Within a month thirteen provinces had been lost, and both Chihli and Shantung were showing signs of disaffection. The Throne gave ear to the people's wishes, and agreed to the prayer of the Assembly to promulgate the fundamental articles of the Constitution. The Sovereign was thus shorn of practically every vestige of power, and there was nothing left for him to surrender. The Government would have been what some desire—namely, a Sovereign with an empty title at the head of a Republic. When I first entered upon office I was in favour of a Constitutional Monarchy, in the hope that the position might be still saved. It seemed as if my desires were on the eve of realisation when the Chihli troops accepted these proposals and Shantung cancelled its declaration of independence. But after the recapture of Hankow the navy mutinied; no sooner was Hanyang taken than Nanking fell. A friendly Power then mediated with a request for an armistice and Peace Conference in the interests of humanity.

"I accordingly sent a representative to Shanghai to discuss the situation, but after a fortnight's conference no result was attained, and the Republicans refused to abate one jot of their demands for a Republic. The Provincial Assemblies of Chihli and Honan then followed their example, and constant outbreaks were occurring in the interior. This has been followed by successive revolutionary successes at Urga, Kuldja, and Khailar. Even feudatories which have been loyal for centuries were thus deserting the dynasty. I was consumed with grief at the thought of the imminent ruin which confronted us, and the heritage of woe which awaited the dynastic altars. I was forced to lay the facts before your Majesty, and you accordingly deigned to summon the Princes and Ministers to an audience, at which each and all gave expression to identical views. You did then issue a Decree summoning a National Convention to determine the future form of government. This was a complete frustration of my original hopes, but I still clung to the possibility that the Convention might not insist upon a Republic, and might adhere to the Constitutional Monarchy. But no decision has been reached on the place of meeting or the mode of election. Meantime telegrams came pouring in from persons of eminence in their respective districts, from Viceroys and Governors who had done the State some service, from Envoys abroad who were well versed in foreign affairs, and even from Chambers of Commerce in the ports, with the strongest appeals for a Republic. In the secrecy of my chamber I shed tears, the while I wondered how the affections of the nation had been so utterly alienated and how irretrievable had our fortunes become. This is my first reason for stating that I have failed in performing my duties.

"To refer to military matters. When first I emerged from retirement and took over the supreme command I felt that the Hupei situation was

of extreme urgency, and asked for reinforcements and funds. It was not till you had accorded your consent that I agreed to accept the post. But time was needed for the raising of troops and the provision of money. Your repeated mandates enjoining my departure had reached me before I arrived at the front. On reaching there I put fresh energy into officers and men; and had the occasion been pressed home, it is highly probable that Wuchang might have been recaptured after the fall of Hankow. But at that time the discussions of the Assembly and the unanimous demands of all classes of the community urged a policy of pacification. In consequence, repeated Decrees were issued, deprecating further hostilities, and I had the honour to proclaim your merciful mandate, and to call a halt to renewed fighting. When I reached Peking I found that the Treasury was completely exhausted, and that there was an utter lack of munitions. Negotiations for a loan were fraught with entire failure. The campaigns in Ch'ien Lung's reign for the conquest of Turkestan and the Tibetan frontier, those of the succeeding reign against the rebels in five provinces, involved the expenditure of nearly 100,000,000 taels. The glorious campaigns of half a century ago against the Taipings and other rebels cost at least ten times that sum. At present we dare not look a month ahead for provision of funds. It is true that your gracious grants from your private treasure have rendered us secure from dispersion of our forces through hunger. The fact remains that we are devoid of means for augmenting our troops or increasing our supplies. We have to do as best we can with the scanty force at our disposal, and if we protect one place, it is at another's expense. This was why we failed to succour the weak garrisons at Nanking, Hsiangyang, and Chingchau. On the other hand, the Republican forces are everywhere inciting the lawless element to cause disturbances. While cities once lost cannot easily be recovered, there is every likelihood of trouble breaking out in districts hitherto tranquil. Everywhere fresh troops rally round the Republican standard. Our numbers remain ever stationary. The force recently raised in Manchuria cannot immediately appear on the scene. The ever-increasing disturbances in Honan and several other provinces cannot immediately be suppressed. Thus has failure so far attended our military operations, and herein is my second reason for saying I have failed in performing my duties.

"While we have been quite unable to wage a successful campaign at home, our relations with foreign Powers have been full of perplexities. To take only the most conspicuous instances, there was the question about railway transport for the troops; the appropriation of the Customs to meet our obligations abroad; the demand of foreign Chambers of Commerce to protect life and property on the ground that the Treaties were no longer being observed. Further procrastination will only hamper us with fresh obstacles, and no plea based on reason or sentiment will suffice to retrieve the position. Meantime all governmental reform is suspended by reason of the war; the administration remains as rotten as ever. It is one of our comparatively smaller difficulties that such talent as we possess finds it no easy matter to translate the theory of the schools into practice.

"At this time, when my powers are declining, I have failed in requiting

the Imperial bounty which has assigned to me this heavy responsibility. The cup of my offences is daily filling, and my desert is less than a grain of sand or a drop of water. It would better become me to demand dismissal from my post, but I cannot bear to speak of leaving your Majesty's side when I, whose family for so long has enjoyed Imperial favour, am the witness of the poignant anxiety which is your companion day and night. But if I accept this high honour I shall be casting a slur on the equitable bestowal by the Throne of rewards and punishments, and shall be failing in the duty which I owe to the people of this country. How should I ever be able to guide public opinion or to set an example for the official body to follow? It remains to entreat your Majesty to cancel your former mandate, and to allow my purity of intention to be manifested to the world and my guilt to suffer no further aggravation. I pause and can say no more."

The receipt of the Memorial was acknowledged by an Edict issued on the 28th, and once more Yuan prayed to be allowed to refuse. Again the document that he placed on record was one of the greatest interest, and only the requirements of space prevent its reproduction. But still the Throne would accept no refusal. Yet a fourth time Yuan supplicated, and this time the Throne accepted the inevitable, and agreed to the euphemistic suggestion that "the honour be postponed until the country reaches a more tranquil state."

In the meantime an event had occurred which entirely changed the situation. Late on the evening of Sunday the 27th a telegraphic memorial was received in Peking, purporting to be signed by the Viceroy at Wuchang and by no less than forty-six of the Imperial Generals. The burden of their prayer was that the Throne would consider favourably the question of abdication. It was pointed out that from the commencement of the revolt the Imperial policy had been one of peaceful settlement, which owing to the uncompromising attitude of some of the Princes seemed now in danger of being departed from. In this the Generals saw grave consequences. Every day their troops, engaged in the double task of suppressing brigands and fighting the revolutionaries, were growing weaker. More scarce, too, grew the funds for carrying on the struggle. The fight, they urged, was an unequal one, the verdict of a National Convention in favour of a Republic a foregone conclusion. In the meantime the people paid the price of uncertainty

and chaos. For their sakes the Generals, still pledging their loyalty, besought the Throne to rise to the last great act of abnegation.

Thus it seemed that the army spontaneously arose and took a hand. In fact, Yuan Shih K'ai was playing a last card. While discussions which seemed destined to prove interminable were proceeding in Peking, he had been busy through his emissaries in the country. Either because it made for peace and was honestly recognised as sooner or later the inevitable outcome, or as his enemies alleged because it suited his own hand, Yuan had thrown his weight on the side of the Empress Dowager and the section of the Palace party which favoured abdication, and had been using his influence with the army. The result has just been seen.

It was a delightfully typical way of cutting the Gordian Knot. In effect an ultimatum, it yet opened the door to a graceful retirement for the Imperialist party from the stage. While they could not reconcile themselves to abdication at the bidding of a handful of men, whom in their traditional pride they regarded as vulgar democrats, they might honourably yield in pity for the sufferings of the great mass of their unoffending people, when besought by their soldiers who had served them so faithfully and well.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE MANDATE OF HEAVEN

THE ultimatum of the Generals, for to that it amounted in the judgment of those accustomed to interpret the euphemisms of state documents, did not secure the immediate conversion of the militant Manchu Princes. With a courage that would have been admirable a few months or even weeks previously, but which was now merely imprudent, they continued to cast the weight of their influence in the scale against abdication. At the same time attempts were made to discredit the Memorial of the Generals, the rumour being industriously circulated that it was a forgery.

For a few hours the situation looked extremely critical. But the crisis had not been unforeseen. Yuan Shih Kai had realised clearly enough that in the end it would be the strong arm which alone could prevail. Accordingly the strength of the military forces at his disposal had been gradually increased during the long-drawn-out anxious days since the termination of the Peace Conference, when the issue still hung in the balance. He had also taken the precaution to remove the machine guns of the Imperial Guards, and at the same time had taken steps to have Liang Pi, a Manchu, removed from the command of this Division, which had been recently placed under the newly created Baron Feng Kuo Chang, the victor of Hanyang. The new Waiwupu building, where Yuan had taken up his abode, was almost like a fort, provisioned and guarded by a powerful body of troops, while the city was thoroughly well patrolled by Chinese troops on whom the Premier could rely.

It was well these precautions were taken. In Peking the



LIANG PI, FORMERLY VICE-MINISTER OF WAR UNDER THE MANCHUS. THE VICTIM OF A REVOLUTIONARY BOMB.



HIS HIGHNESS PRINCE CH'ING : THE LAST MANCHU PREMIER.

Manchu Princes were in their own stronghold, with thousands of Bannermen at their call. Here above all places the reassertion of a Chinese ascendancy after more than two hundred and fifty years of undisputed Manchu domination was especially galling. There was not lacking also the desire for vengeance on the race which at several places in the provinces had mercilessly hunted Manchus.

In the circumstances it was particularly fortunate that the precaution had been taken to remove Liang Pi. But for this the Imperial Guards would have been left at a critical juncture deprived of their commanding officer, a state of things that might have led to far worse consequences than even organised fighting could have done.

Liang Pi was an outstanding man amongst the Manchus. Still young, even in his earlier youth he had been the object of revolutionary attentions. Recognising in him the evidences of a capacity which might develop a great power of organisation in the Manchu ranks and prove an obstacle in the path of Republican ideals, an attempt had been made a few years previously on his life. He now fell a victim to that most detestable of all forms of murderers, the bomb-thrower. On the night of the 27th he had visited Prince Ch'ing. Arriving home about midnight, he was received with a bomb, which shattered his legs below the knee. His assailant was killed, his face being so shattered as to render him unrecognisable. Liang Pi, who in life had been a man of courage and strong character, rallied, but his body had passed the point where the spirit can exercise its sway. Three days later, after a brave struggle, he succumbed.

The motive of attack has not been made clear and like many another incident of the Revolution will probably remain something of a mystery. There have, of course, been numerous theories. Many believed, and it is not improbable that he had been put out of the way so as to weaken the opposition which would be made in some quarters to acquiescence in the ultimatum of the Imperial Generals. Others, that the Chinese in Peking feared that he would instigate reprisals. Two months previously it had been rumoured that a plan was on foot to turn all Chinese out of Peking and exterminate those who refused to go. It was said that Liang Pi had been a strong supporter of the

proposal. Finally, the theory was put forward that he was killed out of revenge. He was generally credited with a measure of responsibility for the death of General Wu Lu Chen, and it was supposed by some that Liang Pi's assailant was an old friend and comrade of General Wu.

Be this as it may, however, it can be readily seen that Liang Pi's death at such a crisis might have been fraught with the most serious consequences had he continued to hold the command of the Imperial Guards. As it was, this and the other precautions of Yuan combined ultimately with the pressure of the army and demonstrations by the Republican forces* to compel recognition of the fact that the play was now played out.

On the 1st of February instructions were issued to the Wai Wu Pu to make peace. In other words, the Imperial Clan, or at least a majority of them, had decided on abdication. It only remained to come to terms in regard to the future.

This decision was recorded in the following Decree, which, however, was not published till several days later:—

"We (the Emperor) have respectfully received the following Imperial Edict from her Imperial Majesty the Empress-Dowager Lung Yu:—

"As We have received the telegraphic memorials from Ts'en Ch'un Hsuan, Yuan Shu Hsün, the Minister to Russia, Lu Cheng Hsiang, and others, and Tuan Chih Jui and the other military commanders requesting Us speedily to adopt the Republican form of government to avoid further bloodshed, and in view of the perilous situation of the country and industrial depression the people have suffered, we cannot bear to see the millions in misery for the glory of one Family. But the questions of the matters relating to Our Ancestral Temples and the Imperial Mausolea are important, while the courteous treatment of the Imperial House and the Imperial Kinsmen, the treatment of Manchus, Mongolians, Mohammedans, and Tibetans should also be prearranged. We, therefore, give whole powers to Yuan Shih K'ai to make the arrangements carefully and to consult speedily with the People's Army beforehand in regard to the articles of treatment, and to report the whole to us."

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* A column had been dispatched to Chefoo," Chinwangtao was threatened, and troops had moved northward from Nanking to subdue General Chang Hsün. In connection with the latter expedition some considerable fighting took place. The series of engagements, in which the Cantonese Brigade on the Republican side distinguished itself, culminated in the final defeat of Chang Hsün on the 14th of February. Chang Hsün again demonstrated his capacity to look after himself and once more escaped.

The next few days passed comparatively uneventfully. The proposals which had already been put forward by the Nanking Republic dealing with the position and treatment of the Imperial Family and their dependents were neither unreasonable nor ungenerous. There were, however, still a few points remaining for adjustment, and these took some little time to settle.

Under the final arrangement, which was arrived at in the second week in February, the Emperor was to be allowed to retain the title of Emperor of Ta Ch'ing and to be treated in accordance with the etiquette which would govern relations with a foreign monarch on Chinese soil. He would receive an annuity of four million taels, an income equivalent to between five and six hundred thousand pounds sterling. For the time being His Majesty would continue to occupy the Palaces in the Forbidden City, but his ultimate place of residence would be the Summer Palace, a few miles outside Peking. The tombs of the Imperial dead would be maintained by the Nation, and the mausoleum of the late Emperor Kuang Hsü, now nearly three years under construction, would be completed by the Republic. The nobles would retain their titles and the Imperial Clansmen, together with the Mongols, Mohammedans, and Tibetans, would enjoy equal rights with Chinese under the Republic. The Bannermen, who under the guise of military service had lived for generations in idleness, would continue to receive their monthly dole until such time as a means of livelihood could be found for them. Finally, the Palace attendants would, for the most part, remain as heretofore, but that intriguing and unhappy race of men, hitherto the bane of Chinese politics, was to be allowed in the course of nature to become extinct.

Such were the main conditions on which was to be surrendered the splendid Manchu inheritance, and nothing now remained but for the Throne to play its part. There was no reason for further delay. On the contrary, China New Year was at hand, by which time it was desirable that an end should be made.

And so the day arrived for the issue of the last Imperial utterances of the last of the Ta Ch'ing line. It was the 25th day of the twelfth moon of the third year of Hsuan T'ung,

being the 12th of February, 1912. The Decree which wrote the last lines in the Manchu tragedy was in these memorable terms :—

"We (the Emperor) have respectfully received the following Imperial Edict from her Imperial Majesty the Empress-Dowager Lung Yu :—

"As a consequence of the uprising by the Republican Army, to which the different provinces immediately responded, the Empire seethed like a boiling caldron and the people were plunged into utter misery. Yuan Shih K'ai was, therefore, especially commended some time ago to dispatch commissioners to confer with the representatives of the Republican Army on the general situation and discuss matters pertaining to the convening of a National Assembly for the decision of the form of government to be adopted. Two months have elapsed and no really suitable mode of settlement has been discovered. Separated as the South from the North are by great distances, the unwillingness of either side to yield to the other can result only in the continued interruption of trade and the prolongation of hostilities, for, so long as the form of government is undecided, the nation can have no peace. It is now evident that the hearts of the majority of the people are in favour of a republican form of government; the provinces of the South were the first to espouse the cause, and the Generals of the North have since pledged their support. From the preference of the people's hearts, the Will of Heaven can be discerned. How could We then bear to oppose the will of the millions for the glory of one Family? Therefore, observing the tendencies of the age on the one hand and studying the opinions of the people on the other, We and his Majesty the Emperor hereby vest the sovereignty in the people and decide in favour of a republican form of constitutional government. Thus We could gratify on the one hand the desires of the whole nation, who, wearied of anarchy, are desirous of peace, and on the other hand would follow in the footsteps of the Ancient Sages, who regarded the Throne as the sacred trust of the Nation.

"Now Yuan Shih K'ai was elected by the Tzu Cheng Yuan to be the Premier. During this period of transference of government from the old to the new there should be some means of uniting the South and the North. Let Yuan Shih K'ai organise, with full powers, a provisional republican government, consulting with the representatives of the Republican Army as to the methods of union, thus assuring peace to the people and tranquillity to the Empire, and forming the one great Republic of China by the union, as heretofore, of the five peoples—namely, Manchus, Chinese, Mongols, Mohammedans, and Tibetans, together with their territory in its integrity. We and His Majesty the Emperor, thus enabled to live in retirement, free from responsibilities and cares and passing the time in ease and comfort, shall enjoy without interruption the courteous treatment of the Nation and see with Our own eyes the consummation of an illustrious Government, an ideal state in truth to be admired."

At the same time a valedictory Decree, dignified and characteristic in sentiment and language, was issued. "In ancient times," it began, "the ruler of a country emphasised the important duty of protecting the lives of his people, and as their shepherd could not have the heart to cause them pain." It then proceeded to justify the Throne's policy on high moral grounds and to exhort officials and people to acquiesce.

Thus in the odour of sanctity passed the Ta Ch'ing House or the Dynasty of Great Purity. In the picturesque Chinese phrase, which has become historic, it had "exhausted the Mandate of Heaven." Nor was it undeserving of its fate. Corrupt and vicious, unscrupulous and cruel, it was predestined for many years past to extinction. Insensate and selfish, without political discrimination, and lacking in even an elementary sense of justice, its end was merely hastened by the folly and avarice of the present generation of the Imperial Clan. Yet there is a quality in the human heart which evokes a pang of sympathy, if not regret, at the passing even of effete and useless things. The House of Nurhachi had once been great. An obscure clan, living in the shadow of the Long White Mountain, had made of themselves a conquering race. They had subjugated Manchuria from the Palisade to the Yalu, from the Amur to the Great Wall and the sea. They had imposed their sway over the Mongolian Princes, the descendants in the direct line of the mighty Genghis Khan, and dominated the immense regions that stretch away from Manchuria in the East to Tibet in Central Asia. Finally, by a wise and fortunate combination of statecraft and arms they had seated themselves on the Dragon Throne. There they had shown both their greatness and their weakness. A virile race, skilled in the arts of war, no Chinese force could stand against the famous Manchu bowmen. But in the arts of peace the Chinese were their masters. This the Manchus had the greatness to realise. Garrisoning the country to overawe the people, they ruled through Chinese institutions and largely through Chinese officials. And despite the fierce diatribes of the advocates of republicanism, for more than two centuries they performed their task well. "So far as can be judged from the

imperfect data of native historians of former days, compared with the observations of foreigners at present," wrote no less an authority than Dr. Wells Williams but a few decades ago, "there is little doubt that this enormous population has been better governed by the Manchus than under the princes of the Ming Dynasty; there has been more vigour in the administration of government, and less palace favouritism and intrigue in the appointment of officers, more security of life and property from the exactions of local authorities, bands of robbers, or processes of law; in a word, the Manchu sway has well developed the industry and resources of the country, of which the population, loyalty, and content of the people are the best evidences."

But the Manchus themselves were destined to fall victims to the allurements of Chinese civilisation. In a generation or two the hard lessons of the camp and the battle-field had begun to be unlearnt. Two centuries of the luxury and vicious ease of the wealthiest of Oriental courts completed the tale of their decline.

History repeats itself. The Manchus had risen to greatness, like many another dynasty, by a strong right arm and the qualities that are begotten of a certain rough purity of life, and, like many another, they had fallen through weakness to resist the insidious ravages of sloth and vice. The only difference, perhaps, lies in the significance for the modern world of the forces which have caused their fall.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE NEW ORDER

THE epoch-making Decree of the 12th of February was received in Peking without protest, without excitement, and seemingly without interest. The night passed quietly, a profound silence over all things, the streets deserted save for the police and military guards. On the morning of the first day in the life of the Ta Chung Hua Min Kuo, the Great Chinese Republic, or quite literally the "Great Middle Flowery People's Kingdom," it was difficult to imagine the vast change that had taken place. There was an entire absence of demonstration. Men went about their avocations as usual. Through the great gates of the massive Chienmen the ceaseless stream of traffic ebbed and flowed. It was only less now than formerly because whole families had long since left the city and its requirements were fewer. It was not that men were interesting themselves in politics; that is hardly in the nature of the common people. Theirs but to accept the decrees of Fate, and the manner of their acceptance in Peking was but characteristic. It could only be at a later period that they would appreciate the fundamental nature of the change that had been wrought. In the meantime they patiently waited the ultimate outcome before taking stock of its possible bearing on their traditional mode of life and thought. Looking from the city wall across the yellow roofs of the Forbidden City, brilliant and beautiful under the bright sunshine and clear blue of the sky, it was still more difficult to realise that in all human probability the Vermilion Pencil had written its last decree, that the institutions of an older and more picturesque world had gone down before relentless aspirations to more utilitarian things. But so it was. The

voice of the People had been formally proclaimed the voice of God.

In truth times were changed. The fact was emphasised in the course of the day when Yuan Shih K'ai, the former protegée and henchman of the last of the Manchus, as Tzu Hsi has been not inaptly called, formally assumed the position of organiser of what was designed to be a democratic order, and, addressing the country for the first time, issued a proclamation which was at once an appeal and a command, confirming all officials in office and calling for loyal co-operation and support. He had previously sent a courteously worded telegram to Dr. Sun Yat Sen and his colleagues communicating the Imperial Edicts. At the same time foreseeing, or already aware of, the demand that would be made on him to go to Nanking, he expressed his desire to do so, but feared that the maintenance of order in the North might make it difficult, the troops being "like the trees of the forest for multitude," while "to the north-east the people are not unanimous." Meanwhile he invited the earliest possible expression of view on the steps to be taken to achieve unity.

The news of the abdication, though welcome, had failed to give that complete satisfaction to Republican minds which might have been expected. They disliked the form of the arrangement and the manner in which it had been carried out, nor could the blandishments of Yuan Shih K'ai blind them to the fact that the existence of the Nanking Government had been ignored. In their hatred of the Manchus they would have liked in their hour of triumph to inflict upon the fallen dynasty even further humiliation. In their confidence in themselves they resented what in effect was a resignation, or more truly an appointment in favour of Yuan, with instructions to form a Provisional Republican Government, even though his task was to be carried out in consultation with the Republican leaders. They would have had it a direct surrender to the Nanking Republic.

Yet there can be no doubt that the manner of the abdication constituted an effort of statecraft of the first order. No doubt the line taken was to some extent fortuitous, in that its primary object was to effect a retirement of the Manchus with the remnant of dignity

that still remained to them. But, had any other course been open which equally met the Manchu point of view, it is highly improbable that it would have been pursued. If one thing more than another is characteristic of Yuan Shih K'ai, it is his capacity for reducing things to a point from which there can be no divergence. If the last few months had reflected anything of Yuan's mind, they had shown a man of deliberateness and independence. From the commencement he had stood virtually alone. He had had to make up his own mind. Whenever it was possible he had taken time for thought, but once his line decided upon, he had invariably seen to it that the necessary steps were taken that the realisation of his ideas would be assured. To leave things to chance was never Yuan's way. Though not susceptible of proof, it may be taken that, despite the aloofness of Yuan's attitude, the terms of the Decree of Abdication were virtually his. And, let it be repeated, they were wise terms.

The Manchus form an integral part of the population of the Chinese dominions. If the Chinese, in the sense of the indigenous population of the eighteen provinces of China, have been under the yoke of an alien race for two hundred and fifty years, they have in compensation now received the territories of Manchuria and Mongolia, the noble appanage of Nurhachi's house, which wise statesmanship may yet save from foreign hands. Drastic treatment of the Manchus could only lead to friction. The easiest way to reduce the causes of friction to a minimum was by allowing the reigning House to retire with at least the remains of their self-respect. The importance of appearances in China, and their immense compensating value, can hardly be imagined, much less appreciated, by those who have never lived in close contact with the Chinese people. In descending from the Throne of his fathers, because "from the preference of the people's hearts the will of Heaven can be discerned," it could be claimed for the guardians of the infant Son of Heaven that they resisted to the point of the manifestation of the Divine Decree. They then surrendered their great inheritance to the people's will. It may not be in accordance with strict fact. To Western minds in all the circumstances it may

even seem childish. Nevertheless it meant much, and might prepare the way to a broader citizenship.

Another point, not less important, and one which some of the more ardent spirits of Nanking and Shanghai seemed for the moment to overlook, was the point of view of the North of China and the great dependencies. Whatever might be the true position in the South, north of the Yangtze there was but little real enthusiasm for the Republican ideal. Conceivably the Northern Provinces might not accept a Republican Government whose only sanction was the force which the self-elected Republic at Nanking could afford. But their traditional respect for Imperial Decrees might tend to reconcile them to the change. It was a sanction, at least, which they could understand.

But if the Republican party were in some respects dissatisfied with the course which had been taken, the sound sense and statesmanlike instinct of the leaders were not going to allow a mere matter of form, which was little more than an academic point, to stand in the way of unification of the country's interests. The main point in principle had been achieved. They had presented an unyielding front in their demand that the Manchus must go. They had rid the country of a regime which in recent years had retarded progress and almost strangled its life. The same resolution of purpose would now be turned to inducing the more extreme wing of the party to a moderate course. They had of course to protest in principle, and this they did. But they accepted the situation, except as regards Yuan's ideas on the subject of coming to Nanking, and did what they could to smooth the way for Yuan Shih K'ai.

The Nanking reply was contained in the following telegram from President Sun:—

"After the receipt of the unofficial news of abdication from T'ang Shao Yi, T'ang telegraphed to me that the Ch'ing Emperor had abdicated and that you would support the Republic. The settlement of this great question is a matter of the utmost joy and congratulation. I will report to the National Assembly that I agree to resign the office of President in your favour. But the Republican Government cannot be organised by any authority conferred by the Ch'ing Emperor. The exercise of such pretentious power will surely lead to serious trouble.

As you clearly understand the needs of the situation, certainly you will not accept such authority. I cordially invite you to come to Nanking and fulfil the expectations of all. Should you be anxious about the maintenance of order in the North, would you inform the Provisional Government by telegraph whom you could recommend to be appointed with full powers to act in your place as a representative of the Republic? Expecting your reply to this telegram, I hereby again extend to you our cordial welcome to Nanking."

The wise moderation and spirit of conciliation displayed by this message was only exceeded by the self-negation involved in the course that was now pursued by Dr. Sun Yat Sen. Less than two months had elapsed since his return to his native land. For his years of exile and labour he had been rewarded by the highest recognition which the Republican party could accord him. Whatever detractors might have to say, and however grotesque, and in a sense *faute de mieux*, his election might have appeared, it had now been clearly demonstrated that disciples of the more advanced thought in the country were prepared to accept him as their leader. Nor was their confidence misplaced. In these few weeks he had played a great part in a great crisis. How great will perhaps never be fully known. But his influence had been on the side of moderation, and his policy honourable and patriotic beyond all praise. He now quietly retired, or at least sought to retire, because he saw clearly that ultimate salvation could only be achieved through the medium, at the moment at least, of Yuan Shih K'ai, and that the needs of the country now demanded an experienced administrator and another and, it must be confessed, a heavier hand.

On the 14th of February he followed up his telegram to Yuan Shih K'ai with the following dignified address to the Nanking Assembly:—

"To-day I present to you my resignation, and request you to elect a good and talented man as the new President. The election of President is a right of our citizens, and it is not for me to interfere in any way. But according to the telegram which our delegate, Dr. Wu, was directed to send to Peking, I was to undertake to resign in favour of Mr. Yuan, when the Emperor had abdicated and Mr. Yuan had declared his political views in support of the Republic. I have already submitted this to your honourable Assembly and obtained your approval. The abdication of the Ch'ing Emperor and the union of the North and

South are largely due to the great exertions of Mr. Yuan. Moreover, he has declared his unconditional adhesion to the national cause. Should he be elected to serve the Republic, he would surely prove himself a most loyal servant of the State. Besides, Mr. Yuan is a man of political experience, upon whose constructive ability our united nation looks forward for the consolidation of its interests. Therefore, I venture to express my personal opinion and to invite your honourable Assembly carefully to consider the future welfare of the State, and not to miss the opportunity of electing one who is worthy of your election. The happiness of our country depends upon your choice. Farewell."

The Assembly, however, required a good deal of persuasion to accept this point of view, and it was only after some considerable debate the resignation was accepted provisionally. Even Dr. Sun's influence could not make them follow the course which Yuan's policy seemed to indicate, and they stipulated that President Sun should remain in office until the new President had been elected and duly installed.

The next afternoon, the 15th of February, was fixed for the election. But the morning was free, and President Sun Yat Sen seized the opportunity to perform a last and picturesque official act before laying down the reins. Paying a ceremonial visit to the tomb of the first Emperor of the Mings, the last purely Chinese Dynasty (A.D. 1368–1644), who had delivered the country from the Mongol domination, and for a few years had had their capital at Nanking, he performed an impressive ceremony, in which was symbolically offered back to their old rulers the country which the Manchus had wrested from them.

It was a curious proceeding, this representative of Republican institutions discharging rites at the shrine of one of an Imperial race, but it was calculated from the purely Chinese national point of view to make a powerful appeal.

In the afternoon the Assembly reluctantly proceeded to the election of a new President, and as a result it was declared that Yuan Shih K'ai had been unanimously elected.

Thus outwardly were sunk the differences of North and South, merged theoretically at any rate in the personality of the one man who, as events had shown, had throughout been the dominant factor in the situation. There were

still, however, great points of divergence, and there was a feeling of uneasiness and uncertainty abroad as to Yuan's probable attitude towards the Republican ideals and aspirations. Briefly these were represented by two outstanding desires—the foundation of the Republican capital at Nanking, and the coming South of Yuan Shih K'ai to take the Oath of Office and assume the reins of government. By such means alone would the reality of their triumph be made manifest. How far, if ever, Yuan would proceed in these directions or either of them was open to serious doubt. Both steps were known to be contrary to his personal inclination, and the proposed removal of the capital offended his political judgment.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE QUESTION OF CAPITAL

AT this juncture Dr. Sun and his colleagues determined that it would be expedient and appropriate to send a special mission to Peking to attend upon Yuan Shih K'ai. Such a mission could only serve a useful purpose. It would show a cordial acceptance and a proper respect for the man who for the time being was to occupy the first position in the State. It would gratify the North and demonstrate to the extreme wing of the Republican party the sincerity of their leaders' declared intention to place the interests of the country before the trivial claims of personal feeling. It would prove an attitude of conciliatoriness which would produce a good impression on foreign Powers. Finally, it would give an opportunity to discuss many important questions, and by personal intercourse to persuade Yuan Shih K'ai of the expediency of a change of capital and the necessity of his coming to Nanking to take the Oath of Office before the Provisional Assembly which had gone through the form of unanimously electing him.

In accordance with this decision, it was soon arranged that Mr. T'sai Yuan Pei, a prominent member of the Nanking Cabinet, and Mr. T'ang Shao Yi, should head a mission of delegates from Nanking and Wuchang to Peking, where Mr. T'ang, whose surrender to Republican ideals was now complete, would, it was hoped, bring to bear the great influence he was known to exercise over Yuan Shih K'ai. The task before the mission was a difficult one. To outside observers, however, it seemed as though with both sides informed with the spirit of reason the difficulties should have been capable of solution. It was obviously

indicated as a move of high policy that Yuan Shih K'ai should pay a ceremonial visit to the South. Only by such a step could reality be given to the change in Southern eyes and the results of the struggle that had been waged in the cause of political liberty achieve a just recognition. The question of the capital presented greater difficulty. Reflection, however, seemed to show a way here too. There could be no two opinions that provisionally Peking should be retained. Any change at this juncture could only result in intensified chaos, and reason demanded that the new order should hasten slowly. The choice of the permanent capital was necessarily one for the people, and should be left over at least until the National Convention had been assembled and provincial feeling should have had time to cool, rendering possible a more just estimate of the requirements of the situation.

In the meantime feeling ran high, the permanent retention of the capital at Peking, its removal to Nanking and again its removal to Wuchang, all having their keen advocates. As a compromise Tientsin was also suggested. But this solution to the question, though free from objection except on the score of expense attendant on removal, had but little to recommend it. Its adoption, indeed, would have argued a lack of breadth of outlook and an unreasonableness of mind which would have reflected but little credit on the Chinese people and scarcely augured well for the new regime.

Unfortunately there was an almost universal tendency to deal with the matter on narrow lines. Different sections of the Republican party loudly asserted the respective claims of Nanking and Wuchang, though probably, apart from a measure of legitimate sentiment for a capital near the centre of the eighteen provinces, they were chiefly moved by the desire to secure by every possible means the domination of Southern influence. Again, the commercial community at Shanghai were reported to be strongly of opinion that a change to Nanking would be in the general interest. They doubtless saw in it great benefits to Shanghai trade. Similarly Hankow and Tientsin, if invited to express opinions, would presumably have perceived advantages in Wuchang and Peking.

It is obvious, however, that a decision of this important issue should not rest with any one section of Chinese opinion, nor had the views of the great commercial centres, which must be to some extent influenced by the consideration of their individual interests, any particular claim to consideration. If they had any weight it might fairly be contended that the vested interests of Tientsin, which was the port of Peking, and in some respects had developed on that account, should have a paramount claim, to say nothing of the claims of the vested interests of Peking itself, which should not be allowed to be prejudiced without grave cause.

But, in truth, the considerations which make for the selection of a seat of government must be sought for on an altogether higher plane. They must be independent of local interests and provincial rivalries. Many points require to be considered. The claims of expediency, strategy, economy and sentiment, may none of them be ignored, and are entitled to be weighed carefully by minds freed from prejudice.

At this juncture, however, such a condition was the last that could be expected, and it was fortunate that events, as will be seen, combined to postpone the decision. In the meantime we may permit ourselves a glance into the merits of the rival claims.

In the change of the capital of the Indian Empire from Calcutta to Delhi we have an instance of an appeal to the imagination which cannot be withstood. It is unfortunate that there is no city in China which is similarly capable of uniting sentiment. Wuchang has a long and honourable history as a great commercial mart. Long before Hanyang and Hankow came into existence it was a great city. Indeed, Hanyang and Hankow were its offspring. It is still a great city, but it has no particular historic interest, and the only sentiment that can attach to it in the hearts of the people of the new Republic is that which arises from the fact that here was struck the first great successful blow which was destined to bring about the downfall of the old regime.

Nanking, on the other hand, has at times been the capital of China. In the third century it was the capital of

the State of Wu, the middle of the three kingdoms into which China was then divided. A little later, from A.D. 317 to 582, during four successive dynasties, it was the seat of the reigning House, while allusion has already been made to the fact that in the fifteenth century, under the Mings, the last purely Chinese dynasty, it was for thirty-five years the capital. The first of the line, having thrown off the Mongol yoke, had elected to return to this ancient and purely Chinese city, whence it became, as it were, a symbol of freedom from the domination of a foreign conqueror. The old Ming Palace and the tomb of the founder of the dynasty still remain, the city's chief memorials of an Imperial past.

At the present time it is difficult to say exactly how far the almost passionate enthusiasm of certain Southern Chinese for Nanking is a feeling of true sentiment, but the suggestion may be hazarded that, apart from the ambition to maintain Southern influence, it is at least as much attributable to hatred of the Manchus, and through them of the city where they have so long held sway, as to affection for the Southern capital. In calmer moments they may be less blind to the appeal of Peking. It, too, has Imperial Chinese traditions. Though it cannot claim to have been the capital so early as Nanking, it has a record as the seat of government extending over nearly eight centuries. As long ago as 1264 it became the capital of Kublai Khan, the grandson of Genghis Khan, and except for the short period of thirty-five years under the first two Ming Emperors, already referred to, it has continued to remain the seat of the governing power. Despite the fact that the founder of the Ming Dynasty saw fit to forsake it for Nanking, the third Emperor, Yunglo, one of the greatest and not the least wise of the dynasty, was fully alive to the expediency of having his capital in the North, and once more transferred the seat of government to Peking. Apart from this, Peking is a magnificent city, more full of historic interest perhaps than any in China. Inside its walls it contains many memorials, while a few miles away to the north-west are the magnificent mausolea of the Ming House. Set in a vast amphitheatre of hills, formed in the shape of a great horseshoe, lie thirteen of the dead of the

last Chinese Imperial line, as it were keeping watch and ward, and waiting for the return of a conqueror of their own race.

The conqueror has come, or, rather, the conquest has been achieved. It is in a form perhaps that would have been incomprehensible to them, but nevertheless it is a Chinese conquest. Dispassionately regarded, the restoration of sovereignty to the Chinese people in the place where an alien race has so long occupied a place, would seem perhaps to constitute a greater appeal to the imagination than the mere act of shaking off the dust of the city that except for a few short years was the capital of one of the greatest dynasties in Chinese history.

These are things that appeal to different minds in different ways. North of the Yangtze, Peking is the capital which is enshrined in the people's hearts. In the South it appears, generally speaking, to be Nanking, with a minority in favour of Wuchang.

And so the test must be sought in other directions, and the inquiry embarked upon as to the policy which is most expedient and which will most make for progress.

It has been urged that Shanghai is the commercial capital of China and that it is particularly desirable on general principles that it should be in closer touch with the seat of government. Its position in relation to Nanking is compared to that of New York and Washington. Again, it is urged that Peking is out of the way, while Nanking is situated on the Yangtze, the great city of commerce, and in closer touch with the outside world. From this arises the suggestion that influences from abroad will more readily reach to the Empire's heart and through it permeate the people.

In olden times there might have been something in this argument, for Nanking was easily accessible by land and water. But modern means of communication have changed all that. As far as radiating an influence through the eighteen provinces of China is concerned, Wuchang is far better situated. And if Wuchang is the true centre of China Proper, Peking is no less the true centre of the vast Chinese dominions. It can, at least as easily as either of its Southern rivals, become a centre radiating the light of modern

thought. It is easy of access. It is the focus of many railways. Its antiquities attract the people of all nations.

But here again it is largely a matter of individual opinion, and thus the final test must be sought in the application of the principles of utility. These, it will be found, determine the matter in favour of Peking seemingly beyond all question. The material considerations of economy, convenience, and strategical requirements appear to proclaim Peking essentially the proper seat of government.

In the first place, the complicated and extensive machinery of government is already housed. Of late costly buildings have been erected on European lines, and much has been spent on Government offices. In the present state of China's finances the additional burden of erecting a new capital could not justifiably be assumed without grave reason.

In the matter of convenience of government Peking has two advantages. In the first place, it has a magnificent climate. Secondly, its railways have created it a centre for all parts. From this point of view Nanking cannot compete with either Wuchang or Peking, and its position geographically prevents it ever becoming so highly centralised. As between Wuchang and Peking, on careful analysis it will be found that the balance in the matter of communications is at present somewhat in favour of Peking. On it converge from the south, firstly, the great central trunk from Hankow, which is destined to be continued to Canton in the extreme South and to link up with a railway penetrating the hitherto almost closed province of Szechuen, and secondly, the eastern trunk between Tientsin and Pukou. From the north-east come the Imperial Northern Railways, with their Manchurian and Siberian connection, while to the north-west runs the line to Kalgan, which until the outbreak of revolution was being pushed rapidly forward, opening up Mongolia to the west. Later developments may equalise matters in this respect and place Wuchang on a plane with Peking, when there will be little to choose between them.

This brings us to the last and perhaps the most vital question of all, that of the strategic necessities of the situation. It is not to be supposed that Chinese territory

under a Republic will be any less desirable than it was under Imperial rule. Nations will still turn covetous eyes on those regions which they have perhaps already mentally ear-marked for their own. It is not necessary to be more specific. The danger of dismemberment in the main comes from the North, where population is more sparse and the hold of Government less firm. The removal of the capital to the South will only tend to weaken that hold. The seat of government is the centre of gravity of the State. Attempts may be made to distribute their authority by the erection of powerful satrapies, a species of wardens of the marches at distant points, but the tendency cannot be thus combated. With the capital at Nanking or Wuchang, the hold on the great dependencies will be surely relaxed until the point is reached when it may be lost for ever.*

* The explanation may perhaps be pardoned that this view was formulated at the time the controversy seemed likely to become acute. It represented an attempt to weigh fairly the claims of the rival cities and in fact formed the gist of a contribution to the *Economist*, dated from Peking as long ago as the 27th of February last. The course of subsequent events and further consideration have only served to confirm the writer's belief in its soundness. It also received somewhat remarkable support from a few Chinese thinkers who, from their training and environment, would naturally have preferred to support the claims of Nanking, but exhibited a remarkable honesty and independence of thought at a time when feeling on the subject in the South had almost become fanaticism.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE CONFLAGRATION IN THE NORTH

THE Nanking delegates arrived at Peking shortly after midday on the 27th of February by special train from Tientsin, where they had spent the previous night. They were received with every honour. Even the great central gate of the Chienmen, the principal entrance to the Tartar City, had been thrown open. It was a subtle indication of the great change. Formerly the side gates were ordinarily used, and the central gates, which are on the long straight load which leads from the Great South Gate at the central point in the wall of the Chinese City up to the gates of the Forbidden City itself, were only opened to royal personages. There was, too, a striking contrast between the unassuming mien of a few foreign-clothed Chinese, with a sprinkling of military uniforms, and the tawdry splendour of an Imperial progress.

The first meeting with Mr. Yuan, as we must now call him, took place in the afternoon, the proceedings being of a merely formal nature. Mr. T'sai Yuan Pei, the chief of the Education Department in the Nanking Provisional Government, made a short speech to the President, and handed him a letter from ex-President Sun. Mr. C. T. Wang, who had been one of General Li Yuan Hung's most valued assistants at Wuchang, also presented a letter from General Li. In reply the President made due acknowledgment of the great honour which had been conferred upon him, and expressed the hope that he might assist in the realisation of their ideals. At the same time he made a conciliatory reference to an intention to visit Nanking shortly. On the question of the capital, however,

Mr. Yuan still maintained his position in favour of Peking on economic and strategic grounds.

A deadlock, of course, ensued, the only hope of solving which lay with General Li Yuan Hung, who was said, on mature consideration, to be inclined to throw the weight of his influence in the scale in favour of Peking. It appears that an appeal was now made to him to endeavour to persuade the advocates of the removal to Nanking to accept the principle of retention of Peking. It was pointed out that this question, by dividing the South from the North, threatened to plunge China into a state of anarchy. The more enlightened classes of the people, it was urged, were at one in the choice of Peking. The obstinacy of the Nanking advocates not only betrayed their narrow-mindedness, but also placed a stumbling-block in the way of the union of interests which all desired

While the matter stood thus, a temporary end was put to the discussion by developments in an entirely unexpected quarter. Various sections of the Northern troops suddenly got entirely out of hand and proceeded to gratify their instincts for loot and destruction. Within a few days the richest portions of the fairest cities of North China were sacked and reduced to ashes. Nor did the country-people escape. In many parts, when they had worked their will upon the towns, the looting soldiery and the rabble that in each place became associated with them spread over the country-side, leaving ruin and sorrow in their train. The conflagration which spread over North China, dealing out desolation on every side, recalled the excesses of the Boxers in 1900, though fortunately its causes and the channels into which its energies were directed were entirely different.

The main trouble commenced in Peking, though, as will be seen later, troubles commenced elsewhere more or less simultaneously, or even antecedently at other points.

About seven o'clock in the evening of the 29th of February the 3rd Division of the troops, which were quartered near the new Waiwupu buildings, where Yuan Shih K'ai had his residence, suddenly rose. Streaming off in various directions, they began to loot systematically. Subsequent events showed them as having arranged to commence operations simultaneously at three

different points. One force invaded the prosperous business quarter in and about the Hatamen Ta Chieh, the great road which runs from north to south through the eastern section of the Tartar City, where they broke into and looted every shop and residence suspected to contain valuables. In many instances, according to the account of the Peking correspondent of the *Peking and Tientsin Times*, from which much of what follows is taken, shopkeepers who did not promptly hand over sufficient treasure to satisfy their visitors were roughly handled, and in a few cases were shot or bayoneted. Within an hour the Hatamen Road and the hut'ungs, or lanes, branching off it presented a terrible spectacle. Furniture, doors, windows, porcelain, and glassware were smashed, and then fires broke out in several places, principally in the neighbourhood of the Waiwupu, which was soon enveloped in a dense cloud of smoke. The flames could be seen high in the air. Fortunately, there was very little wind stirring: Peking must otherwise have been practically destroyed.

In the meantime another gang of soldiers, numbering perhaps a thousand, had gone to the Ch'ang An Ta Chieh, "the great road of Everlasting Peace," which runs parallel to, but west of, the Hatamen Ta Chieh, about half-way between the latter and the walls of the Imperial City. Letting themselves loose in that locality, and guided by ricksha coolies, who knew the reputedly wealthy places, the looters ran from shop to shop, their numbers decreasing owing to the departure of those who had secured as much booty as they could handle. Half an hour later a bazaar on the east side of the road was set on fire. The buildings there were largely built of wood, and soon a gigantic conflagration lit up the entire neighbourhood, producing a brilliant spectacle. The yellow roofs of the Forbidden City gleamed like gold. Upon them could be seen numerous figures watching the fires and wondering, with no slight sense of apprehension, no doubt, what the cause of the outbreak might be. This was but the forerunner, however, of other fires which broke out continually in that locality until after midnight, when in that area alone hundreds of houses were burned outright. The

Tunghuamen, the eastern gate of the Imperial City, fell an early victim, recalling, if only faintly, something of that never-to-be-forgotten spectacle when the massy Chienmen fell a victim to Boxer fury scarcely more than a decade ago.

The scene was appalling, but the night's work still went on. Not its least strange feature was the respect that was shown for foreign life and property. While inmates of pillaged dwellings could be seen in the smoky glare seeking a place of refuge, and gangs of looters, acting upon sudden impulses or promptings ran hither and thither, leaving an ever-widening trail of destruction, smart bodies of foreign troops, some mounted, others on foot, passed quickly and silently through the rioters, without interference, and brought isolated foreigners living in the city into the Legation area. And from all sides echoed the continuous rattle of musketry, the practice of the looters being to loose off a score or so of shots to frighten the householders out of resistance and facilitate their task.

The third party had begun work outside the Chienmen, among the prosperous shops and houses that border this main thoroughfare of the Chinese City. At this point the looters only set fire to one shop, but the damage they did there was appalling. Fortunately, Chiang Kuei Ti's Tungchow Brigade of old-time troops was quartered in that vicinity, and these blue-coated men, who are old enemies of the 3rd Division, turned out and did good work in keeping the mutineers within certain bounds.

Early in the night large parties of unexcited troops, on whom it was thought reliance could be placed, were sent in various directions to restore order. But in most cases the opportunity to loot the city was too strong to resist. The police also joined in, after throwing away their jackets and caps, while thousands of coolies and loafers increased the ranks of the looters to a mob of proportions that defied control. Like a great fire well started the conflagration would not be stayed. It must burn itself out; the only hope was to prevent its spreading. Towards morning the shooting dwindled down to a few irregular shots, varied by occasional fusillades where demonstration was thought necessary. As early as one o'clock bodies of men began to leave the city.



A Peking Street after the outbreak on the first of March, 1912.



A Peking Patrol.

Each man led a pony laden with loot, and the expression of the men's faces was that of knowledge of a good night's work well done.

But though the initiators of the trouble had taken their departure the end had not yet come. The infection had spread too far and wide, and even after the light had come spasmodic looting continued in the outskirts of the city.

As the day passed quiet was restored. But it was the quiet of apprehension rather than that begotten of a sense of security or confidence in the re-establishment of order. General Chiang Kuei Ti's troops were brought in to police the city, and such other measures were concerted as the situation rendered possible.

For Yuan Shih K'ai it was a situation of keen humiliation, and nothing spoke more eloquently of this than the following *communiqué* which he issued to the foreign missionaries, merchants, and other residents of Peking:—

"This unexpected disturbance has filled me with sorrow. One of my chief duties was to preserve peace and order in the capital. Up to the present I have been uniformly successful. Unto you, strangers in a strange land, I wish particularly to convey my sincere regret. Every possible measure of precaution has now been taken to prevent a recurrence of disorders."

Nevertheless, with the night came the recurrence of the trouble which men expected. On the previous night the eastern quarter of the city had been mercilessly pillaged and burnt. The Imperial City had escaped, owing to the attitude of the Imperial Guards, who stood firm at their posts and showed no signs of wavering. The western quarter had also escaped, the Imperial City, a great oblong in the heart of the Tartar City, presenting an obstacle to communication between its eastern and western sections. But the latter, commonly called the West City, was only reserved to suffer on the following night the same fate. Once again it was the soldiers of the 3rd Division who led the way by attacking a big pawnshop. Thence the contagion spread, and a mob of uniformed men, with the dregs of the city in their train, spread ruin in the beautiful courtyards of the West City. The West City is in the main a residential quarter, compared to the East City, which is more generally the business

quarter. In the former are found beautiful specimens of old Chinese houses, with their stately courtyards and quaint gardens, appealing to the imagination and charming the senses. Here can be found a dignity and peace typical of the scholarly refinement of another age—an age centuries old, that is rapidly passing away, and yet which is one of the finest and most elevating traditions in the heritage of the Chinese race. Robbery and fire here too had to do their work, and the morning in Peking broke on as painful a spectacle of desolation as the human heart in search of sensation would wish to look upon.

Two nights had left their mark on the finest sections of the great city. By a curious irony the Legation quarter, whose banks and foreign business houses these many weeks past had been receiving the portable wealth of Chinese and Manchus alike, and the Imperial City, the gorgeous home of the hated Manchu, alone escaped. In the one case the foreign guards were too formidable, in the other the Imperial Guards, a body not to be despised, were standing to arms behind the Imperial City walls, ready enough to fight if need arose. Those to suffer were the harmless and often the poorer and less influential citizens, who in many instances lost their all.

It was a striking illustration of the elemental nature of the outbreak and the absence of political significance. Men aimed to enrich themselves, and they sought out the easiest prey.

From Peking, where the worst was now over, the trouble spread to other cities. Tientsin the great commercial centre of the North, easily fell a victim. Inspired by the news of the doings of their brothers in arms in Peking, and encouraged, it was said, by the presence of some of the looters who had made their way to Tientsin homeward bound, an outbreak occurred on the night of Saturday, the 2nd of March, just forty-eight hours after the commencement of the Peking disaster.

The trouble commenced in a small way in the Hopei district. It was not long, however, before the contagion spread, and within a comparatively brief space of time men of the City Police Force, of the Military Police, and even of the Viceroy's Guards, reinforced with the scum of the city, were at work robbing and ruthlessly destroying.

The city of Tientsin, in the sense of the original city —the Ch'eng li, within the city wall—lies a little back from the south bank of the Grand Canal near its junction with the Pei Ho. During the rule of the Provisional Government, which took charge after the city was captured by the Allies in 1900, the walls were destroyed, partly as an object-lesson and partly to prevent a recurrence of the difficulties the Allies had experienced in capturing the city should the necessity ever again arise. On the site of the walls were made four great boulevards, now traversed by electric trams, which establish communication with the foreign settlements lying along the river bank below. The rectangular space within, however, forms only a proportion of the densely populated area known as Tientsin City. The suburbs—the Ch'eng wai, outside the city walls—stretch away in all directions, and to-day the wealthiest sections and principal yamens and public offices are found outside the old area.

Between the Maloo, or horse-road, as these boulevards are called, on the ancient city boundary on the north, and the Grand Canal, runs the Ku I Chieh, popularly known as "Old Clothes Street," with its hundreds of shops stored with rich furs, pictures, and quaint and costly curios. In virtual continuation of it on either side are the streets of the bankers and money-changers and pawnshops.

The Grand Canal is spanned by a bridge, called the Chin Hua Ch'iao, the "Bridge of Golden Flowers," better known as the Iron Bridge. On the left of the bridge, after crossing from the southern side, is the Customs' Taotai's yamen. The street is known as the Ta Hut'ung, or the "Great Lane," and its shops are amongst the finest in Tientsin. It runs for about a third of a mile and then reaches the Pei Ho, which is also spanned by an iron bridge, the Chin K'ang Ch'iao, the "Bridge of the Golden Jar," better known to foreigners as the Viceroy's Bridge. Beyond lies the Viceroy's road, a magnificent modern thoroughfare running up to the city station of the Peking-Mukden railway line, where a junction is effected with the Tientsin-Pukou line, and by means of a subway beyond.

The Viceroy's yamen, the Mint, the Exhibition grounds, the Provincial Assembly hall, the offices of the Peking-

Mukden and Tientsin-Pukou railways, the important bureau of the Taotai of Industries of the Province of Chihli, housed for the most part in magnificent modern buildings, all are here, in the Hopei or "north of the river" section of Tientsin, which railway developments decree as the point of future growth.

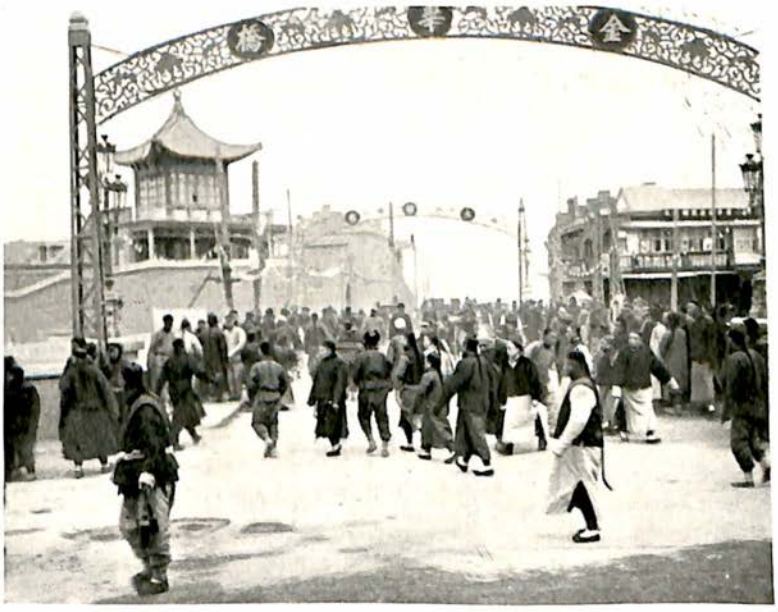
It was in this neighbourhood that looting operations commenced. Thence they spread across the Viceroy's Bridge into the Ta Hut'ung. By eleven o'clock fires began to break out here and there, the inevitable culmination of robbery and violence. Within a few hours this short but populous and prosperous thoroughfare was almost completely gutted. On the west side of the road the Customs' Taotai's yamen on the river bank alone escaped, while on the opposite side only two houses at the corner facing the yamen survived to mark the point where the representatives of law and order had made some little attempt to stem the violence of the mob.

In the meantime the attention of parties of looters had been directed to the Mint, and later on to the railway offices, both believed to contain in their vaults substantial amounts of treasure. The railway offices were saved by a company of the Somersetshire Light Infantry from the British Concession, who arrived just as they were about to be taken possession of. The Mint, however, a fine new building, fitted at great cost with the finest modern plant, was completely destroyed, after removal of a sum of approximately half a million dollars. It must have been a work of undisturbed labour and resolution, affording a remarkable illustration of the impunity with which these looting operations were carried on. To reach the treasure a hole had to be cut through a wall of solid masonry, and its removal must have required considerable time, many and willing as were the available hands.

Simultaneously with these happenings the Ku I Chieh, "Old Clothes Street," and its wealthy continuations were suffering the same fate. The looting also spread along the Pei Maloo, the great street where was once the northern city wall. Among the buildings here was a great bazaar built in the foreign style, which was completely burnt, presenting next day a peculiarly gruesome spectacle, with the



MACHINERY OF THE MINT AT TIENTSIN AFTER THE OUTBREAK OF MARCH 2ND, 1912.



THE CHIN HUA CH'IAO AT TIENTSIN, BRIDGING THE GRAND CANAL, AND LEADING TO THE DESTROYED TA HU T'UNG.

charred remains of an unfortunate inmate—who must either have lost his nerve and been burnt to death, or been suffocated or perhaps shot while attempting to escape—in a sitting posture on the ledge of an upper window.

Beyond this point the destruction was only occasional, but much of the wealthiest business quarters had been destroyed. The loss of life, however, was not relatively great. Men were not out to kill. Their aim was to enrich themselves. Of course, resistance met with violence, and there were many instances of armed uniformed men, some of them being police actually on duty, who used their position to rob civilians without regard to whether they were looters or only poor wretches escaping with a few portable belongings, all that was left, perhaps, of their ruined homes. In this way no doubt quite a number of unoffending people were ruthlessly shot by these uniformed brigands, the servants of the public, paid to assist and protect.

It was not till the following morning that the appalling nature of the outbreak was made manifest. By night it was a spectacle, impressive and even grand, but with the cold light of day upon the still smouldering ashes and the cracked and tottering walls, it represented a heart-breaking story of desolation and ruin.

Nor was the tale of destruction in North China even yet complete. News had come in that Friday night had witnessed the commencement of the destruction of Paotingfu, the capital city of the great Province of Chihli. Saturday night had seen its completion. Shihchiachuang, to which attention was drawn at an earlier stage of the Revolution in connection with the murder of General Wu Lu Chen, suffered the same fate, neither shop nor house escaping.

At Fengtai, a few miles outside Peking, where there are large warehouses for the storage of produce in transport from the interior by way of the great western trade routes and the Kalgan railway to the Tientsin market, looting also went on to a lesser extent. For a time the railway property and the connection between Peking and the sea were in some danger, despite the presence of a company of Somersets and pickets of foreign troops at intervals throughout the line. The danger was dispelled, however, by the

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. Dispatched from Tientsin to Fengtai by train on Sunday, March 3rd, they gave the marauding troops an hour's notice to take their departure—an invitation which they deemed it wise to accept.

It would be easy to fill many pages with accounts from the various parts of the country of the excesses that occurred in those few days. One element was fortunately absent, and it was the only phase in an otherwise disastrous situation on which the Chinese were entitled to congratulate themselves. There were virtually no foreign complications, though there were two most deplorable episodes which resulted in the deaths of Dr. Schreyer, a leading member of the medical faculty at Tientsin, and the Rev. F. Day, of the Church of England Mission.

Dr. Schreyer lost his life assisting friends in the city during the outbreak at Tientsin, being shot under circumstances which may be said to amount to accidental. Mr. Day, on a mission tour with his Bishop, Bishop Scott, of North China, and the Rev. F. S. Hughes, unhappily contrived to become involved, together with the latter, though through no fault of their own, in an altercation with mutinied soldiers. Attacked in an inn to which they had withdrawn, Mr. Day was also shot.

From these painful episodes we must turn to a consideration of the causes of this series of outbreaks, which have been variously explained. In some quarters it has been asserted that the rising of the 3rd Division in Peking was due to Manchu machinations, working through secret agencies on the excitable soldiery in the hope of creating a situation which might be taken advantage of to secure the Manchu restoration. In others it has been suggested that the troops of Yuan Shih K'ai were adopting this method to demonstrate their objections to his leaving the North. Critics of Yuan Shih K'ai have even gone to the verge of charging him with creating a diversion for his own ends. The suggestion was that a small outbreak was to be engineered by a favourite and trusted officer, which, though it would be promptly suppressed, would prove to the delegates from Nanking the necessity of Yuan Shih K'ai remaining in Peking. The evidence, however, in support of such a charge is not of a kind to carry conviction, and

it would be unjust, as it would be unsound, to base even a suggestion on such foundations. To accept such a theory, indeed, would be to misapprehend Yuan's character and the ruling elements in the situation. Of all men he is the least rash. Knowing his countrymen, he knew that much of the strength of his position lay in his undisputed power to control the army and what he stood for with the foreign Powers. No man understood better than he the rapidity with which the forces of disorder grow in China, or the danger of allowing the army to feel its power. Yuan's most severe critics have accused him of opportunism and lack of scruple, but they have never accused him of folly. He might have been prepared to go far in any direction which would prove to the Nanking delegates the necessity for his remaining in the North, but it is entirely unbelievable that he could be a party to a proceeding which in its consequences might prove at once an indescribable crime and a colossal blunder.

Nor does it appear necessary to seek for any such explanation of the outbreak, which seems to have been entirely devoid of political significance and the outcome of natural causes. The immediate cause doubtless differed in different places. But a careful examination of the circumstances of the trouble in the country generally leaves no doubt as to the correct conclusion to be drawn. To put the matter crudely, these risings were inspired by discontent and the fear of losing the great chance that had seemed to offer of rapidly acquiring competence through the medium of the sack of wealthy cities. It was known amongst the soldiers that disbandment would shortly be the fate of many of them, and that their pay in any case would be reduced. Some regiments of the 3rd Division had recently returned from Hankow and Hanyang, from which they had cast covetous eyes across the river on the wealth of Wuchang. The great city had been at their mercy, and they had been compelled to stay their hand. Now they were to be reduced in pay. In other words, they had served their turn, and had not got all they considered themselves entitled to. Similarly, the story of the home-coming of the 2nd Division to their camp at Yungpingfu adds its quota of evidence of the correctness of this conclusion. They arrived in the middle

of February, in time for the Chinese New Year, which fell on the 18th of the month. Within a week, that is to say some days before the outbreak in Peking, without any apparent cause, they had fallen upon the unoffending country-side and compensated themselves at the people's expense for the disappointment they had experienced at the instance of those in authority. In Kalgan, where there was also trouble, the explanation was not less simple. The troops, finding themselves masters of the situation, held up the town to ransom, and used their position to serve their own turn. So with other places, and where they did not rise on their own initiative, it was not long before they caught the infection from elsewhere.

In other words, the series of disasters which swept over the country at this time merely formed an illustration of the true nature of the discipline of the troops of the Chinese Model Army, and gave an indication of the kind of trouble that is to be expected if the strong hand is relaxed or withdrawn.

CHAPTER XXXVI

PROBLEMS OF GOVERNMENT

IN the face of a common danger men draw together and sink their differences, the necessities of self-preservation dictating, for the time at least, harmony of counsels and united action. The present occasion proved no exception to the rule. Nothing more was heard of the demand for the President to proceed South for the purpose of taking the Oath of Office. The delegates telegraphed insistently to Nanking that Yuan Shih K'ai must not be asked to leave the North just yet, and it was urged that the oath should be administered in Peking.

In the circumstances the Nanking leaders had perforce to acquiesce, and the ceremony of swearing in Yuan Shih K'ai as the Provisional President took place in the new Waiwupu building on the afternoon of Sunday the 10th of March.

The ceremony was a simple one. There was nothing of that element of gorgeous pageantry that marks a great state occasion. There was indeed a general absence of colour from the scene. The Republic had not yet been recognised by the Powers, and as a consequence there were no uniforms of foreign diplomats and soldiers. Again, with the exception, of course, of military officers, the Chinese for the most part had donned the sombre garb of the West, the frock coat; but few wore the flowing dress of the country, and none wore it in the gorgeous form so long associated with Chinese official life.

But if the ceremony was quiet, it was not wanting in dignity. There was an air of earnestness that endowed the proceedings with a sense of reality they might otherwise have lacked, and indicated an appreciation of the importance

of the occasion of which even its perfunctory nature had failed to rob it.

The attempt had been made to secure as far as possible a representative gathering.

"There were present members of the Nanking Delegation, representatives of Vice-President Li Yuan Hung and of the Tutus or Military Governors of the different provinces, the chiefs and assistant-chiefs of the different governmental departments in Peking, commanding generals of the eight Manchu, Mongolian and Chinese Banners,* Officers commanding armies, divisions, brigades and regiments, Admirals and Captains of the Navy, Generals commanding the Gendarmerie and the Left and Right Wings, the Prefect of Shuntien, the Magistrates of Tansing and Yuanping, Members of the gentry of the different provinces in Peking, each province being represented by one man, two members from the Manchu, Mongolian, Mohammedan and Tibetan gentry, two members from the General Chamber of Commerce and two members from the Local Government Council to represent the inhabitants of Peking.

"When all were standing in their places two ushers led the President to the centre of the Hall of Ceremony, where he then stood facing the south. All present in the Hall bowed once to the President, who responded in the same manner. The President then read his oath of office as follows:—

"'At the beginning of the establishment of a Republic there are many things to be inaugurated. I, Shih K'ai, sincerely wish to exert my utmost to promote the democratic spirit, to remove the dark blots of despotism, to obey strictly the Constitution,† and to abide by the wish of the people, so as to place the country in a safe, united, strong and firm position and to effect the happiness and welfare of the five divisions of the Chinese Race.‡ All these wishes I will fulfil without fail. As soon as a President is elected by the National Assembly I shall vacate my present position. With all sincerity I take this oath before the people of China.'

"The document, which was dated the 10th of March, 1st year of the Republic of China, and signed and sealed by Yuan Shih K'ai, was then handed over to Delegate Ts'ai Yuan Pei.

"Mr. Ts'ai on receiving this document paid a high tribute to the President's abilities and expressed his hope that on some future day the President would find an opportunity to pay a visit to the South. To this

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* The effete corps composed of descendants of the troops with which the Manchus had conquered China.

† See Appendix B.

‡ Chinese, Manchus, Mongols, Mohammedans and Tibetans, who are represented respectively, in the new five-barred flag of the Republic, by Red, Yellow, Blue, White and Black.

the President stated in reply that, conscious himself of a lack of virtue and mistrusting his ability, he had been recommended by President Sun for the presidency. The modesty of President Sun, he continued, was well-known to the Chinese people, and therefore he felt the more embarrassed in accepting this onerous position. He then thanked the Nanking Delegation for the congratulations which they had expressed on behalf of themselves and of President Sun, and withdrew." *

Thus Yuan Shih K'ai was at last formally established in the position of Provisional President. Three days later, with the strong approval of Nanking, he appointed Mr. T'ang Shao Yi to the position of Premier. This marked another advance, but much valuable time had been occupied in the discussion of matters that might well have been left in abeyance. The question of the visit to Nanking, however desirable from the point of view of form, represented no vital principle, while much time must necessarily elapse before the position of the capital could be determined.

Unhappily, the delay had given just that opportunity which was required to engender a spirit of uncertainty throughout the country. Had there been any sort of real coherence or co-operation between the leaders in the North and South from the day of the Abdication, much of the trouble that ensued might almost certainly have been avoided. As it was, men had been given time to reflect on the bearing of the new developments as regards their individual interests before their imaginations had been impressed by the reality of the new order. What was of even more importance, they had been allowed to realise the weakness of the new regime and the immense potentialities for trouble with which it was endowed.

In the case of the army it has been seen with what results to the North. These excesses were now to be repeated in the South, without the same facilities being at the disposal of the authorities for checking them. In the North the presence of foreign troops was a source of great assistance to the Government. In Peking much was done to restore order by foreign demonstrations in force at the request of the President, and in Tientsin substantial foreign military assistance was given to the local authorities in policing the city. In the South, however, there was not

* *Peking Daily News*, March 11, 1912.

the same moral and material force available, and the Government was shortly faced with a situation of extreme gravity.*

But the preservation of the peace, with its security for life and property, was not the only problem of government. Nor in a sense, strange as it may seem, was it the chief. There were two others, the one of even greater and the other of scarcely less importance. The former was the fundamental necessity to complete arrangements for the provision of adequate funds, without which neither order could be maintained nor any sort of reconstructive measures be undertaken. The latter was the early completion, as far as completion could temporarily be achieved, of the machine of Government, in order that ocular demonstration might be afforded of the truth of the Abdication and men's minds be set at rest as to the reality of the new order.

In the matter of finance, negotiations had been on foot for some time, and what appeared to be substantial progress in the direction of the end in view had already been achieved. During the latter half of February, the representatives of the Four Nations Group† in Peking had been approached by the Acting-Minister of Finance, Mr. Chou Tzu Chi, with a view to securing a series of advances for the purpose of carrying the Provisional Government through the period of reconstruction. On his arrival from the South in company with the Nanking Delegates, Mr. T'ang Shao Yi had taken charge of these negotiations, and on the 27th of February had had his first interview with the representatives of the Group. The latter had already been informed by Mr. Chou Tzu Chi that a sum of Tls. 7,000,000 was urgently required for use of the authorities in Nanking, and that a sum estimated at Tls. 6,400,000 monthly would be required by the Government during the period of recon-

* During March disturbances were reported from Canton, Shanghai, Soochow, Wuchang and other places, while in the middle of April an outbreak of serious proportions occurred at Nanking. Fortunately Huang Hsing had recently been appointed Generalissimo of the Southern Army (*vide* p. 357), and had crushed the rising with merciless severity. More than 200 of the Kiangsi troops were reported to have been executed.

† Alternatively referred to as the Group or the Bankers. Cf. p. 49.

struction. Mr. T'ang confirmed this fact, added a further sum to meet the needs of Peking, and made an explicit statement as to when the money would be required. Of the sum of Tls. 7,000,000, which represented nearly a million sterling, referred to above, Nanking must have Tls. 2,000,000 immediately; the balance would be required in March. During the same month Peking would need Tls. 3,000,000, while for each of the months of April, May, and June, for certain, and as far as could be seen for July and August also, advances would be required at the rate specified by Mr. Chou, that is to say, Tls. 6,400,000 a month.

Mr. T'ang, however, had other ideas besides that of tiding over the immediate difficulties. Alive to the needs of the country, all of which would require money, he invited an expression of the bankers' views on a large reconstruction loan, not less than four-fifths of which should be expended on reproductive works, and the balance on the Army, Navy, and Education. Mr. T'ang mentioned the figure of £60,000,000, accompanied by the suggestion that the loan be made by instalments, spread over a period of five years.

The bankers promised to refer these proposals to their principals, and in view of the urgency of Mr. T'ang's representations they undertook to make an immediate advance of Tls. 2,000,000 required for Nanking, against the receipt of Mr. Chen Chin Tao, the Finance Minister in the Nanking Government, which it was understood would be exchanged as soon as possible for Treasury Bills. The Nanking authorities received this sum on the 28th of February.

Unfortunately some days' delay ensued before the receipt of a reply to the inquiry which had been telegraphed to Europe and America. The events which were described in the last chapter had dealt a heavy blow to public confidence, and proposals of this magnitude could not be rightly undertaken without due consideration of all the factors.

In the meantime, on the 2nd of March an urgent application was made to the bankers by Mr. Chou Tzu Chi for the provision of a sum of Tls. 1,015,000, which was required for salaries and expenses in connection with the various Chinese Legations and Consulates, and even more importantly in order

to make a present of half a month's pay to Manchu and Chinese troops. This payment had become due, in accordance with ancient custom, in the middle of February, on the incidence of the Chinese New Year, and though the obligation had up till now been evaded, it was felt to be dangerous under existing conditions to allow the men to harbour any sense of grievance. The representatives of the Group, who were fully aware of the soundness of this contention, wired urgently to their principals asking that they be authorised to make this advance pending decision of the larger issues.

March the 2nd was a Saturday. During the next week the necessary authorisations were received from Europe and America, and on the 9th of March, the following Saturday, the bankers were in a position to place the sum of Tls. 1,100,000 * at the Government's disposal.

The fact was communicated to the President by a letter which set forth four conditions on which this accommodation was proposed to be granted. These conditions were acknowledged by a dispatch of even date bearing the seal of Yuan Shih K'ai, which categorically confirmed them, and for greater clearness may be reproduced *in extenso*.

"REPUBLIC OF CHINA.

"Office of the President,
"PEKING, *March 12th*, 1912.

"To E. G. Hillier, Esq., C.M.G., Agent, Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, Monsieur Casenave, Manager, Banque de l'Indo-Chine, H. Cordes, Esq., Deutsche-Asiatische Bank, and Willard D. Straight, Esq., Special Representative American Group.

"GENTLEMEN,—I am in receipt of your letter of to-day's date informing me that, having obtained the sanction of your Governments to advance to the Chinese Provisional Government funds for their urgent requirements, as stated in the letter of the 2nd March addressed to you by the Acting-Minister of Finance, your Banks are now prepared to hold at the disposal of the Chinese Provisional Government, against the receipts of

* It should be explained that the tael is of varying value. All the Group's advances were made in Shanghai taels, whereas the specific demands of the Government were sometimes in Treasury taels, between which and Shanghai there is a difference of approximately 9 per cent. Such was the case in the present instance, hence the apparent discrepancy.

the Ministry of Finance, the sum of Shanghai Taels One million one hundred thousand (Shanghai Taels 1,100,000) and I note the arrangements proposed for making this sum available.

"It is understood and agreed,

"1. That the said advance of Shanghai Tls. 1,100,000 will be treated in conjunction with the advance of Shanghai Tls. 2,000,000 made in Shanghai to the Chinese Provisional Government on the 28th day of February last, and that sterling exchange for the same will be settled by the banks in Shanghai to-day.

"2. That this advance of Shanghai Tls. 1,100,000, as in the case of the previous advance of Shanghai Tls. 2,000,000 above referred to, will be covered by delivery to the Banks, so soon as arrangements permit, of sterling Treasury Bills bearing date the 9th day of March, 1912, and for such amounts as, after being discounted at a rate to be arranged, shall yield the sterling equivalent of the said advance, the said Treasury Bills to be secured, subject to the existing charges, upon the revenue of the Salt Gabelle.

"3. That the Banks hold a firm option for the provision of the further monthly requirements of the Chinese Government for the months of March, April, May, June, and possibly July and August, which the Four Groups have already been requested to finance, against the delivery of additional sterling Treasury Bills on terms to be arranged.

"4. That in consideration of the assistance rendered by the Groups to China in the present emergency and of their services in supporting her credit on the foreign markets, the Chinese Government assures to the Groups (provided their terms are equally advantageous with those otherwise obtainable) the firm option of undertaking the comprehensive loan for general reorganisation purposes already proposed to them, to be floated as soon as possible, and to be applied in the first instance to the redemption of the sterling Treasury Bills aforesaid.

"I hereby confirm the arrangements and conditions above stated, and request you to proceed immediately in accordance therewith.

"I am, Gentlemen,

"Yours faithfully,

(Signed) "YUAN SHIH K'AI."

(*Seal*)

On receipt by the bankers of this assurance the sum of Tls. 1,100,000 was paid over to the Chinese Government.

Two days later, on the 11th of March, Mr. T'ang informed the bankers that the President urgently desired an additional loan or advance of Tls. 5,000,000 for Wuchang, of which Tls. 1,000,000 was required in ten days, and the remainder not later than the middle of April. This request also was referred to Europe and New York.

On March the 13th the long-expected reply to these

several requests was received. It authorised the completion of arrangements for the finance of China on the lines which had been indicated,* and on the following day formal notification was made to Mr. T'ang.

A point had now been reached that promised to lead to satisfactory conclusions. The way was now paved for China to meet her current liabilities and to be provided with the means to reorganise her resources on sound and stable lines. It was not to be supposed, of course, that all causes of friction were at an end. On the contrary, when terms came to be discussed differences arising from the difficulty of harmonising the requirements of foreign money markets with Chinese susceptibilities might confidently be expected. But against this could be set the fact that the representatives of the Group in Peking were all men with a deep understanding of the requirements of the situation, who might be relied upon to exert their influence on the sympathetic side. The interested banks had in several instances already met from their own funds the interest coupons as they fell due in order to preserve China's credit, and if the good faith and honesty of the desire of the Group to assist China required further illustration it could find no better one than in an invitation which had already been extended to Japan and Russia to join the combination, thus carrying a step further the good work of internationalising finance in China and tending to deprive it of political significance. It is true that some authorities, whose views are entitled to the highest respect, hold that this operates to weaken China by placing her to a large extent under the domination of the rest of the world. But on the other hand it must tend to maintain the integrity of China by reducing the risk of a "mad scramble" in certain eventualities, and it seems, for the moment at any rate, the lesser of two evils.

* There was only one insignificant point of difference. The sum of Tls. 5,000,000 for Wuchang was required as to Tls. 2,000,000 for the pay of troops, and as to the balance for the redemption of a note issue made by the Wuchang Revolutionary Government. The Group proposed to provide the sum required for military purposes, but to leave the note issue to be dealt with later under the general scheme of reconstruction, which would involve financial reorganisation and the adjustment of matters such as this.

Unfortunately, the realisation of the legitimate hopes to which such a position gave rise was destined to be postponed. While negotiations had been in progress with the Four Nations combination, a syndicate represented in Peking by the Sino-Belgian Bank, but in which it was understood some British and Russian capital was also embarked, had likewise been approached, and, according to the statement subsequently made by Mr. T'ang, a preliminary agreement had been entered into between the Chinese Government and this syndicate during February. On the 14th of March a final agreement, reciting a preliminary agreement under date February 20th, 1912, was signed between the Minister of Finance and the Sino-Belgian Bank, and ratified by the Provisional President. This agreement made provision for a loan of one million pounds sterling at 97, repayable in one year and bearing interest in the meantime at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum. The fifteenth clause of the agreement was credibly reported to be in the following terms, making provision for an extended preference.

"The said bank having helped the Government of China in the time of need by making this agreement, the Government of China specially grants a preferential right to the said bank in case China shall raise any future loan if the conditions be the same as other banks, but the amount for such a loan should not exceed £5,000,000. In case twelve months after the signing of this agreement the Government bonds issued secure a good price the loan will be at least £5,000,000, and it will be included in a £10,000,000 loan. If any future loan be raised by China, and the conditions of the said bank be the same as those of the others, the Government of China will order the said bank to undertake the loan."

The meaning of this clause is, perhaps, in places a little obscure, but its general effect is clear. China had now given an option both to the Four Nations Group and to the Sino-Belgian Bank, unfettered save for the condition that the terms should be equal to the best obtainable elsewhere.

On the 15th of March Mr. T'ang met the representatives of the Four Nations Group in conference. By this time rumour was rife as to the conclusion of what became known as the Belgian loan, and Mr. T'ang was asked if there was any truth in the story. The Premier, as Mr. T'ang had by this time become, had to admit that such an agreement had

been entered into, and in reply to the Group's formal protest he sought to justify the course which had been pursued.

On this occasion Mr. T'ang stated, in the first place, that the bankers of the Four Nations had refused assistance at the time of the outbreak in Peking, which compelled him to go elsewhere. Secondly, he alleged that prior to the agreement with the Group, under date the 9th of March, a preliminary contract had been signed with the Belgians which gave them a prior and more valid right.

Next day, March 16th, as subsequently transpired, the text of the final Belgian agreement was secretly communicated to Nanking by telegram for ratification by the Advisory Council, which at this time was still in existence and vigorously asserting its claim to authority. It was then explained that "as the Provinces of Mukden, Shansi, Shensi, Kansu, Honan, and Canton are all demanding funds, and the Four Powers financial group allows only Tls. 6,400,000 per month for the five months to come, it is not enough, and thus the special loan is needed." Finally, Mr. T'ang ascribed the Government action to a misunderstanding on both sides.

But in truth it was not a position that could be justified from any point of view. The reply to Mr. T'ang's first contention was a simple reference to the fact alleged by the Group and never seriously denied that no application had been made for assistance until March 2nd; that then Mr. Chou Tzu Chi had addressed the bankers in a letter in which he alluded to the crisis in deprecatory terms, stating that "the President fully realised that in the present disturbed situation" the bankers would hesitate to comply with his request without consultation with their respective Ministers, and that such assistance had in due course been forthcoming. The second argument could be no less easily disposed of. If a binding contract had been concluded with the Sino-Belgian Bank in February, continued negotiations with the Four Nations Group, resulting in advances of Tls. 2,000,000 and, even more especially, Tls. 1,100,000, could only be described in crude and disagreeable terms. Again the explanation to the Nanking Advisory Council evoked another reference to the facts, which showed clearly that the Group had agreed to finance the Chinese Govern-

ment on the lines of their full requirements, and that the sum of Tls. 6,400,000 monthly was not the Group's figure, but that which had been mentioned both by Chou Tzu Chi and T'ang Shao Yi. Finally, the documents were too clear to admit of misunderstanding,* while it was humanly impossible to misapprehend the intention either of the Four Nations combination or of the syndicate which was represented by the Sino-Belgian Bank. Both were intent on securing a monopoly in the field of Chinese finance.

But if the policy of Mr. T'ang, on whom rightly or wrongly was showered the whole obloquy of producing this *impasse*, was one that not only could not be defended, but was deserving of the severest censure, it is scarcely fair to pass on without a word on the circumstances that made for this display of human weakness. Though clearly his acts, by which he must and would, we may feel assured, wish alone to be judged, condemn him not only in the eyes of enemies but even of his sympathisers and friends, justice seems to require at least a glance on the reverse side of the picture. It is not to be supposed that Mr. T'ang was the man to embark on a course which would call down upon himself and his country so much opprobrium without substantial cause. Looking at all the factors in the situation it seems possible that there had arisen a need of money in connection with the recent adjustments between the North and the South and the adjustments that still remained to be made. Such may have involved immediate payments, possibly perfectly legitimate, but which could not with propriety be disclosed. If such existed they were obligations which would require to be met without delay, the need of which might explain a preference being given to a combination which would not be inquisitive in the matter of a fund's destination. A second point was that the arrangements which had been concluded with the Four Nations Group created a virtual monopoly in Chinese finance, which the Government

* A suggestion was made in an article over the well-known initials "R. E. B." (understood to be Sir Robert Bredon) that a misunderstanding may have arisen in translation. It does not appear, however, that such an explanation has even been made by the Chinese Government, and if it were, though it would cover the President, who has no knowledge of English, it would not apply to other officials concerned in these transactions.

desired at all hazards to avoid. The delay of several days which preceded the advance on March 9th of Tls. 1,100,000 on the strength of which their rights were placed on formal record, and the further delay, till March 13th, on the part of the Group in determining to exercise their rights, though not unreasonable, no doubt suggested a pretext which helped the scale in favour of the improper course which the Government pursued. That it could have been expected to achieve the end in view, however, is difficult to believe, and that Mr. T'ang's political judgment should have been so gravely at fault could surely only be attributed to a temporary weakness generated by physical and mental strain. Called into the political arena against his will, in indifferent health and suffering the pain of family bereavement, keenly aware of provincial sentiment in the matter of foreign supervision and control, hypersensitive himself in the matter of possible foreign aggression and dictation, and morbidly willing to sacrifice his reputation in what he deemed to be his country's cause, he was certainly far removed from his normal self. Though, therefore, as a politician Mr. T'ang cannot but be condemned, as a man he may well excite our sympathy.

Such in brief were the events which led to what became known as the loan deadlock. Much more could be said along the same lines, but it would serve no useful purpose to analyse the situation more closely or to indulge in further speculation. The representatives of the Groups, of course, protested to their respective Ministers against the breach of agreement which had been clearly perpetrated, the Ministers in their turn protesting to the Chinese Government.* But for the time being the Chinese Government took refuge in silence, while Mr. T'ang departed for Nanking charged to

* There was another cause of protest besides the breach of faith. The Loan Contract with the Sino-Belgian Bank specifically charged the Peking-Kalgan railway, the line to the North through Mongolia, destined in the fullness of time to make connection with the Trans-Siberian railway. The strategic importance of this railway is obvious, and even the Manchus consistently refused to mortgage it specifically to any European Power, though it had been pledged indirectly under a general charge of the enterprises controlled by the Board of Communications. The existence of this general charge now gave a ground for protest.

assist forward the further steps which were necessary to the completion of the machine of government.

With the installation of the President and the appointment of the Premier, these were now reduced to two, namely, the formation of a Cabinet and the calling into existence of a National Council or Assembly. Fortunately, the former of these tasks had been rendered less difficult than it might otherwise have been by the visit to Peking of the Nanking Delegates. This had given the President opportunities of discussing the matter with the representatives of Southern opinion, with the result that the personnel of the new Cabinet had been virtually agreed upon between the President and the Delegates before the latter left Peking. Consequently when they returned to Nanking they did so pledged to support Mr. Yuan's policy, which it was arranged should be announced to the Assembly at Nanking by the Premier, who should make a special visit to the South for that purpose. In due course this programme was carried out, and on the 29th of March the proposed appointments received the assent of the Nanking Advisory Council.

If the Cabinet was not as strong as it might have been and had all the demerits of a coalition, it also had many of its advantages. At any rate the best minds amongst the leaders of Republican thought determined to accept it cordially and to extend to the new Government their strong support. Nor could the North fairly complain of its constitution. Though there was a preponderance of the Southern element, the Cabinet included more than one tried man on whom Yuan Shih K'ai could rely, while the people of the Northern Provinces and Dependencies always enjoyed the comforting assurance that in Yuan himself the State had a Chief Magistrate who was a Northerner of Northerners, well ballasted with a sound conservatism.

The Cabinet contained many names with which we are already familiar. Lu Cheng Hsiang, a diplomat of some European reputation, was appointed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A Shanghai man, he appealed to the South; conversant with the English, French, German and Russian languages and with nearly twenty years' experience of foreign countries, reason confirmed the appropriateness of the appointment on more cogent grounds. For some years

Minister to Holland, Mr. Lu had represented China at the Hague Conference in 1907. Subsequently transferred to St. Petersburg as First Secretary of Legation during Mr. Hu Wei Teh's tenure of office as Minister to Russia, he had been appointed in 1911 Commissioner to negotiate with Russia on the subject of demarcation of boundaries, and later succeeded Mr. Hu as Minister, on the latter's being recalled to Peking. A not less sound appointment was that of Mr. T'sai Yuan Pei, the chief of the Nanking Delegates and Minister of Education in the Nanking Cabinet, who was called to Peking to occupy the same post in the new Government. A member of the famous Hanlin Academy, he was no hasty convert to the merit of modern things. He had passed through the old Chinese literary mill, and then, learning Japanese, had made a special study in Japan of Philosophy and methods of education. Subsequently compelled to leave China for a time on account of his political teachings, he had made further studies along the same lines in Germany. Mr. Chao Ping Chun, who became Minister for Home Affairs, was a Honanese graduate, a fellow-provincial of the President. He had formerly seen service in the Board of Rites and at the Ministry of the Interior under the Manchu regime, but had been one of those to fall, three years before, with Yuan Shih K'ai. To the Ministry of Finance was appointed Mr. Hsiung Hsi Ling, a Hunanese and a metropolitan graduate. He also had seen something of official life, having been appointed Acting Commissioner of Foreign Affairs of Hupei in 1909, and later Salt Commissioner in Fengtien, where he became chief Secretary and Financial Adviser to Viceroy Chao Erh Hsun of Manchuria, by whom he was much relied upon. He also had travelled abroad, and was said to have been a school friend of the reformers, K'ang Yu Wei and Liang Ch'i Ch'ao. Dr. Wang Chung Hui, who was appointed the Minister of Justice, has already been referred to as the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Cabinet of Dr. Sun.

General Tuan Chih Jui, an Anhui man with a sound military record, who had held the command of the Northern Army at Hankow at the time the Edict of Abdication was issued, and had headed the petition of the Imperial Generals praying for the Manchu abdication, was made Minister of

War. Mr. Sun Chiao Jen, the literary champion of the Revolution, became Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, and Ch'en Chi Mei,* the Shanghai Tutu, the Minister of Industry and Commerce. The care of the Navy was placed in charge of Liu Kuan Hsiung, a little-known man who was formerly a commander under Admiral Sah. Finally, the duties of the important position of Minister of Communications were undertaken temporarily by the Premier, Mr. T'ang, the name of Liang Ju Hao, better known to foreigners as Mr. M. T. Liang, a former director of the Imperial Railways of North China, not being acceptable to a majority of the members of the Nanking Advisory Council.

Simultaneously with these appointments General Hsü Shao Cheng, the revolutionary leader against Nanking, became Chief of the General Staff, while Huang Hsing, whom the Nanking Government had elevated to the rank of Field Marshal, received the chief command of the Southern Army.

At the same time President Sun, in fulfilment of his pledge, quietly retired into private life, bringing to a dignified end not the least distinguished and honourable phase of his career.

The early part of April witnessed the arrival of the Cabinet in Peking. In the meantime steps had been taken to call into being a National Advisory Council. It could not be expected, of course, that anything like a representative body could be got together with the existing machinery, but it was hoped that at least a more reasonable collection of men might be assembled than those composing the Council at Nanking. Though it had played a not unworthy part in connection with the abdication, the latter body had recently, by its assumption of authority and its obstructive and, it is to be feared, sometimes foolish attitude,† done much to

* Mr. Ch'en could not immediately proceed to Peking to take up his position, with the result that an acting-appointment was offered to Mr. C. T. Wang, who had assisted General Li Yuan Hung at Wuchang, subsequently representing him at the Peace Conference and as one of the Nanking Delegates. Mr. Wang, not the least able and conscientious member of the modern school, had graduated at Yale.

† Amongst other things, the men in China having never yet been enfranchised and the women for the most part having passed their days without education and in seclusion, it had promised female suffrage.

alienate public sympathy. While it continued to exist it could only be a source of danger, and its early dissolution was very generally desired.

It was now to be replaced by a National Advisory Council, which was to be composed of five representatives of each province, with representatives from the dependencies, who were to be elected in each case by the Provincial Assembly. Where there was no Provincial Assembly, such a body was to be forthwith called into existence by the Tutu in order to exercise this electoral privilege.*

It was some time, however, before the National Council, as it will be convenient to call it, came into being, and several communications were addressed to the electors urging all possible dispatch. But the difficulty was not, generally speaking, with the electors, but rather with the elected, who displayed considerable diffidence about coming to Peking. Yuan Shih K'ai had not yet dissipated the mistrust with which both he himself and the Manchus were in many quarters regarded, and recent events in Peking had induced apprehensions not only for the personal safety of the members, but also that the Council might be terrorised into courses which it might not approve. The difficulty was sought to be met by a proposal to establish the Government offices and the meeting-place of the Assembly at the Nan Yuan or South Hunting Park, away from Peking, under the protection of a guard of Southern troops. To carry out the second part of the proposal, however, would have been fraught with so much danger, while without it the first part would have been of so little value, that the scheme had to be abandoned, the members of the Council being ultimately induced to meet in Peking.

The formal opening took place on the morning of the 29th of April. The place of meeting was the Hall which had already acquired a certain title to interest and fame as the

* It is of interest to note that this constituted the fourth appeal to the provinces in six months. The first had been made by Wuchang, to which place delegates had been sent. Shanghai was the next centre to make the attempt to form a representative National Assembly; and Nanking, where were met in combined conclave during December the delegates of Wuchang and Shanghai, made the third reference, which resulted in the formation in January of the Nanking Advisory Council, destined in turn to give way to the National Advisory Council,

Council Chamber of the Tzu Cheng Yuan, that body which, once so combative and long since moribund, had played so conspicuous a part in the earlier stages of the struggle to assert the people's power. But it was a curiously changed scene. Gone was the sense of Eastern ceremonial, gone the distinctive head-dress, gone the coats of many colours. Of the seventy members present only two still wore the national dress and only one retained the queue.

The meeting was a brief one, occupying scarcely more than half an hour, and the ceremony, which was performed by the President in person, was of the simplest description. But, quiet as the proceedings were, they seemed to be characterised by a deep sense of responsibility, which was only enhanced by the dignity and wise moderation of the inaugural address of Yuan Shih K'ai. Touching one after another on the great questions of the moment—finance, industrial development, disbandment of troops, religious liberty, and relations with the Powers—he preserved a level of statesmanship worthy of this great occasion in the nation's history. Making no promises beyond his power to fulfil, he indicated what seemed to him the lines on which the development of the country should proceed. And if they seemed commonplace they were of the sound and practicable kind that emanate from experienced administrators. "Those who entertain high ideals and aims," ran the opening paragraph, which formed the keynote of the address, "will, no doubt, expect that what I am going to advocate at the beginning of my presidential career will be far-reaching in its effect and full of novelty. But under the present circumstances I can hardly dare to entertain such an expectation. The principle of government, both in ancient and modern times, consists in the establishment and maintenance of public order, and in the clear definition and promulgation of legal systems, so that externally there shall be good and friendly relationships and internally there shall be peace between the weak and the strong. It is with the realisation of these ideals that the country can have her foundation well laid and her existence in the world perfectly secure." Or, as he put it a little later, "Order should be speedily restored, so that the economic condition of the people may be ameliorated, reconstruction work should be carried out

with due care and energy, but all measures should be adopted with due regard to their practical value. In the construction of an edifice its foundation should be well laid, and the labour and material carefully selected. All its layers should be solidly laid one over the other. Attention should not be devoted solely to the outward appearance of the edifice by taking particular pains in plaster work and adornment." In the field of finance a policy was indicated of revision of taxation, involving abolition of Likin,* and a compensating increase of customs duties,† reforms of the methods of tax-collection—especially in relation to the Salt Gabelle, one of the most prolific sources of revenue in China, and the Land Tax—currency reform and a large foreign loan to discharge the balance of foreign obligations accrued during the past few months and to meet the cost of reconstruction. In the same and other connections the necessity of foreign expert assistance was frankly faced. "There are at present very few who are cognizant of financial matters in our country, and such as we have are lacking in experience. Hereafter, in the inauguration of the various political institutions it will be necessary to employ talent from other lands for their guidance and expert advice." Referring to the work of the Departments of Industry and Commerce, and Agriculture and Forestry, the idea was indicated of subsidy and encouragement, while the hope was expressed that "people would not continue only to look up to the air to gain a livelihood, but would also give attention to what was beneath their feet." Reference in the same strain was made to other needs, as has been already indicated, while in conclusion the President congratulated the people on the attainment of the promise of an ideal and the selection of wise administrators to achieve its realisation. But Yuan Shih K'ai's congratulations were leavened with a warning note: "The people may indeed be very joyful over the adoption of a

* The system of Inland Taxation which, of ever varying and uncertain extent, imposes such a restrictive impost on trade, especially between the several provinces.

† What is known as the Mackay Treaty, concluded in 1903, indicated the extent to which Great Britain was prepared to go in this direction, subject to agreement with the other Powers, offering a basis of solution which has been generally regarded as a not unfair one.

Republican regime, after having been for thousands of years under the rule of despotism. But I am greatly concerned over the fact that they have not progressed. I sincerely hope that our people may constantly realise that there is room for much improvement, and not entertain a feeling of self-sufficiency. I profoundly wish that they may regard each other with justice and good faith and not eye each other with mutual distrust. The Premier, T'ang Shao Yi, and his colleagues who have been selected for the offices of the Secretaries of State, are all talented men, well able to cope with the changed conditions. I, Shih K'ai, am relying on their co-operation in furthering the good weal of the country, and hope that the people will place their full confidence in them and accord them their support."

Such in brief were the significant terms of Yuan's message to the five races of the Chinese dominions, such the benediction with which the National Council was launched on its career. Amongst its foremost duties would be the framing of an electoral law which should bring into existence, during the autumn of the year, as nearly as possible a truly representative body to supersede its temporary predecessor. But in the meantime this temporary predecessor must function and face the task of reconstruction. And it may be said perhaps that never before had the members of a National Council an opportunity on the one hand so magnificent, or on the other so fraught with danger. Theirs to wield a potent influence, for good or evil, over the destinies of more than a quarter of the human race. Theirs to achieve the task of drawing back their country from the brink of chaos or to plunge it into a more profound confusion. Theirs to lay the foundations for the realisation of something of the potentialities of their race, or seriously to jeopardise the prospect of future existence on the plane of a great State.

How far and which of these possibilities were destined to immediate realisation will be briefly indicated in the following chapter; for the moment it is necessary to return once more to the all-absorbing problem of finance.

At the time of the opening of the National Council the *impasse* still continued. Each of the two rival combinations claimed under equally valid contracts in pursuance of which

had passed valuable consideration, and owing to the secrecy with which all negotiations had been carried on neither claimant could urge that the other was in any way prejudiced by the receipt of any notice, or anything equivalent to notice, of the engagements of the Chinese Government in their favour. Diplomatic representation had been made, but apparently so far without result. On the contrary, news had come from Shanghai that despite all protests Mr. T'ang was proceeding to raise further sums under the Belgian contract. In point of fact, however, the issue had been already determined. On the 17th of April it was learned that the French Government had caused notification to be made that only such new Chinese loans would be quoted on the Paris Bourse as had been floated through the agency of the Six Nations Group, as they had recently become.* The end was now in sight. In a recent communication to the foreign Ministers concerned the President had emphasised the idea of misunderstanding, but the Ministers, in a strongly worded reply, refused to accept this view. In the meantime T'ang Shao Yi had arrived back in Peking, and on the 24th of April had an interview with the Ministers, by whom, in reply to Mr. T'ang's explanations, it was made perfectly clear that nothing but the cancellation of the Belgian contract as concerned all provisions for

* Japan and Russia, after some discussion, had accepted the invitation formerly extended to them by the Group. Their acceptance, however, had been subject to certain reservations designed to protect what were referred to as their interests in Manchuria and Mongolia. That these reservations were acquiesced in shows how greatly the strength of their position had increased in regard to those regions in the last few years, during which every effort to open up the country by persons of other nationalities, however legitimate, was met with strenuous opposition. When the big Currency Loan Contract was made in the spring of 1911, a portion, namely, £3,000,000, was to be employed in developments in Manchuria. The provision aroused the strongest hostility of Japan and Russia, and if they did not protest strongly then they were certainly only restraining themselves till a more convenient season. Owing to the Revolution the scheme for the time at least had to be abandoned, but the change in Government had only strengthened the hands of Japan and Russia, especially of the latter in Mongolia, where the probabilities are almost certainties against the maintenance of the policy of equal opportunity.

finance beyond the original amount of £1,000,000, would meet the requirements of the situation. The Premier pointed out that in such an event China would have to pay compensation to the Belgian syndicate, in reply to which he was informed that that aspect of the matter was one for China. At last recognising the inevitable, the Chinese Government pursued this course, so that on the 30th of April the Ministers of the parties concerned were in a position to notify the Six Power Group that negotiations might be resumed.

But though the victory lay with the strong, and in the true interests of China probably rightly, the Premier was not converted, and the new phase of financial debate opened with a demand for funds on the basis of an entire absence of foreign supervision and control. On the 1st of May the Finance Ministry in a draft note proposed a series of interim advances pending the flotation of a loan. These advances were to be expressed in general terms as charged on the Salt Gabelle. In other words, an unascertained sum was to be advanced on terms of its unrestricted disposal. This was a request, however, which could not be complied with. The money was required for disbandment of troops and other matters which it was essential should be properly carried out, and it was felt that conditions should be imposed calculated to ensure the accomplishment of the end in view. In the first place, therefore, it was suggested that foreign military officers should be employed to assist the disbandment. Secondly, specific statements should be provided of all purposes for which further advances were required. Thirdly, a competent foreign auditor should be attached to the Ministry of Finance, while finally steps should be taken for the reorganisation of the Salt Gabelle.

The outcry against these proposals was immediate and violent, and the country became insistently protestant against any form of financial arrangement involving foreign interference. The feeling which had been rampant for years was more free than formerly to express itself and shortly left no doubt as to its strength.

The issue which was thus able to arouse public indignation is an interesting and somewhat intricate one. It may briefly and, it is hoped, not unfairly be stated, in its essential features, thus. When in quite modern times the Chinese

Government, for reasons that need not be now referred to, found itself under the necessity of raising loans, it was speedily realised that the money would not be forthcoming from the Chinese people. The reasons for this were twofold. In the first place no Chinese would trust his fortune or any part of it to investment under official administration; and secondly, even if subscribers to public loans could be found, the Government could not afford to pay interest at the rate the Chinese capitalist could himself demand in respect of private and well-secured operations. The result was to force the Government to enter the foreign money-markets, which, having a general idea of the peculatory methods of the old style of mandarin, demanded some sort of foreign control over either expenditure or security, or over both. At one time, notably in the case of several railway loans, foreign rights in this regard were of very considerable extent. But with the growth in recent years of what we have called public opinion* they began to be curtailed. The turning-point came some five to six years ago, the Canton-Kowloon Railway Loan concluded in March, 1907, though less stringent than many of the earlier loans, being the last to involve any substantial degree of control. By the time the next loan, that for the construction of the railway between Tientsin and Pukou, came to be negotiated in the following year, the attitude of the Central Government, stiffened by the demands of the gentry in the provinces, made for recognition of the Chinese point of view. At this stage it was strongly felt by many close observers that a stand should be made for what became known as "the Canton-Kowloon terms." It was felt that if the Central Government could not raise money in the country for the reasons that have been indicated there was a need for a measure of protection to which the foreign investor was entitled. It was also felt, and it is no offence to those honest men in China who are struggling to free the country from a system of dishonest administration, that in the interests of the country a measure of foreign control was essential to ensure expenditure on proper lines. In the event, however, the views of those who advocated meeting the Chinese prevailed. It also happened to be the way of

* Cf. Chapter VI. *ante*, p. 63 *et seq.*

least resistance: *facilis descensus Averni*. An ineffectual system of audit was the only safeguard imposed, with consequences which were shortly seen in the scandals that occurred in respect of the northern section of the Tientsin-Pukou railway. The fierce denunciation which followed, however, gave indications that sentiment in these matters was changing and promised greater hope for the future. About this time were set on foot those negotiations which led to the next considerable financial arrangements. Passing by smaller transactions we come to the loan contract for £10,000,000 concluded in the spring of 1911, designed mainly for currency reform. This was followed shortly by the Hukuang Railway Loan.* On these occasions also, and despite what many regarded as the serious warning which had been afforded by the Tientsin-Pukou scandal, there was an absence of provisions for control. The most that could be said for the restrictive clauses contained in these contracts was that they amounted to a check on ill-directed and wasteful expenditure which might well become ineffectual. The Four Nations Group, the contractors of the loans, seemed to rely, and in the opinion of the writer rightly, on the growing public opinion and the fierce light of publicity that was commencing to beat on the administration of public moneys. Unfortunately, owing to the outbreak of the Revolution the value of this new system of supervision was not tested and the tendency now was to impose more restrictive terms.

It is not surprising that the young Republic resented the indignity of less favourable conditions than those obtained by the notoriously corrupt Manchus. But it must be remembered that the course of events might fairly be supposed to have shaken the confidence of investors for the time being, and it was only reasonable to expect the new Government to build up some sort of reputation for stability and sound administration before large sums could be advanced without adequate safeguards. Again, whatever might be the state of Chinese credit, an obligation lay on those responsible for the flotation of the loan to see to it that the money of investors was not jeopardised. Finally, without doubt the Bankers and their respective Governments had a high-

* *Vide ante*, p. 54.

minded sense of responsibility in the matter of burdening the country with an incubus of further debt without securing to the people a fully compensating advantage.

The situation was one of great difficulty and one in which the parties on both sides were entitled to every sympathy and consideration. Uncompromising as the Chinese attitude was, it is as unjust to describe it as arrogant as to describe that of the Group as unreasonable. It was simply a conflict of legitimate aspirations and not unfair demands. The result was the deadlock which for all practical purposes still exists to-day.

It is not necessary, however, to follow in any detail the events of the interim; it will be sufficient if the principal of them are briefly recorded. In the third week in May an advance of Tls. 3,000,000 was made by the Group, although negotiations had really done but little to remove the causes of difference. The Government need, however, was urgent, and the banks concerned felt justified in giving thus much assistance. By the 12th of June the difficulty had been adjusted, to the satisfaction of the Central Government, by the substitution of a provisional system under which the advances for current requirements, disbandment of troops and the like, were to be disbursed. The main features of the arrangements were firstly the withdrawal of the peculiarly obnoxious provision of disbandment under the guidance of a foreign military officer, for whom was substituted a high Chinese military officer to be deputed by the Government and the local Commissioner of Customs, and secondly the creation of an Audit Department.

The details of the scheme, which are of value as showing how far the Central Government was prepared to go in the direction of meeting the requirements of the banks, were as follows:—

"DRAFT REGULATIONS FOR THE SUPERVISION OF EXPENDITURE OF PROVISIONAL ADVANCES.

"1. An Audit Department to be created adjacent to the Ministry of Finance, composed of an Auditor employed and paid by the Groups, an Auditor employed and paid by the Chinese Government, and the necessary foreign and Chinese staff, who will be selected by the Auditors and paid by the Central Government.

"2. All orders on the Banks for the withdrawal or transfer of funds must be signed by the said Auditors.

"3. The Ministry of Finance will hand to the Banks periodically for their approval specific statements of the objects upon which it is proposed to expend these advances, and these statements, having been passed by the Advisory Council, will be published in the *Official Gazette*. The Ministry of Finance will further furnish to the Auditors all such detailed pay-sheets, statements, &c., as may be necessary to support requisitions for funds to be withdrawn from these advances, and the Auditors, after satisfying themselves that these detailed pay-sheets, statements, &c., are in order, shall sign orders for withdrawal of funds in accordance therewith without further question.

"4. Each disbursement made will be covered by a detailed voucher in accordance with the practice of modern account-keeping. These vouchers will be filled by the Ministry of Finance and will be inspected in the Audit Department by the Auditors.

"5. With regard to the payment and/or disbandment of troops in the provinces, a high Military Officer and the local Commissioner of Customs will be deputed by the Central Government jointly to examine and sign the pay-sheets in triplicate, which will be furnished to them by the local military authorities. The aforesaid high Military Officer and the Commissioner of Customs will be accorded all necessary facilities for investigation. Of the aforesaid signed pay-sheets one copy will be handed to the Governor of the Province, one to the Ministry of War, and the remaining copy, together with the vouchers relating thereto, will be transmitted to the Ministry of Finance in Peking, who will hand the same to the Audit Department for inspection.

"6. The funds for disbursement will be in the custody of the local Commissioner of Customs, deputed by the Chinese Government, who, in order to save the expense of the unnecessary transfer of funds, will be entitled to employ the Customs revenue collection for disbursement, after the same has been duly released by a corresponding transfer by order of the Auditors from the funds of the provisional advances to the Inspector-General of Customs' account in Shanghai. If there should be any deficit in the sum required by the Commissioner of Customs for disbursement, it will be made up by a remittance from the funds of the provisional advances under an order of the Auditors.

"7. In the case of disbursements for the payment and/or the disbandment of troops in Peking and its neighbourhood a high Military Officer deputed by the Ministry of War will co-operate with the Auditors in examining and jointly signing the pay-sheets in triplicate, and the said high Military Officer and Auditors will be accorded all necessary facilities for investigation. Of the said signed pay-sheets in triplicate one copy will be handed to the Ministry of War, one copy to the Ministry of Finance with the vouchers relating thereto, and one copy will be retained by the Audit Department."

On the strength of this scheme two advances of Tls. 3,000,000 each were made to the Government on the

12th and 18th of June respectively, bringing the total advances by the Group to the respectable sum of Tls. 12,000,000, charged on the Salt Gabelle.

The nation at large, however, was still dissatisfied. Although, in order to relieve the situation and dispense with the necessity of foreign assistance, various expedients had been suggested and one after another dismissed, while at the moment great efforts were being made to float a national loan for one hundred million silver Chinese dollars * which promised to prove abortive, the agitation against any foreign loan continued, Mr. Hsiung Hsi Ling, the Minister of Finance, being severely criticised. Mr. Hsiung, however, was not to be deterred from his task until the possibilities of the situation had been fully explored.

In the meantime the principals of the Six Nations Group had been in conference at Paris as to the terms and extent to which China could be financed with justification. On the 20th of June these deliberations came to an end. Their conclusions were twofold. In the first place the right which Russia and Japan had consistently reserved to themselves, namely, to withdraw from the combination at any time in the event of the operations of the Group conflicting with their special interests, was reaffirmed, another step in the dangerous policy of acquiescence in Russian and Japanese aspirations. Secondly, it was decided to offer to finance China on conditions which have not been made public, but which it is understood were in effect as follows:—

1. The borrowing capacity of the Chinese Republic is fixed at sixty million pounds sterling; China may expect that she can borrow up to that sum.

2. The bankers must be appointed the financial agents of the Chinese Government for a term of five years, during which period no money may be borrowed on any pretext save through their agency.

3. Three European supervisors must be appointed, who will control absolutely the expenditure of European borrowings, and who will regulate all contracts pledging in any degree Chinese credit.

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* At the then rate of exchange equal to £10,000,000. The proposed loan was to be made additionally attractive and possible as an investment for foreigners by making it redeemable and interest payable either in gold at a rate now fixed or in silver, thus giving the investor protection against falls and the benefit of rises in exchange.

4. The Salt Gabelle must be administered by the Maritime Customs, or by a separate and similar service under foreign direction, and the revenues drawn from this State monopoly allocated to the service of the new foreign debt as required.

These fresh terms were presented to the Minister of Finance on the 24th of June. By this time in Peking the prospect of any very large loan was beginning to be considered a remote one, and the idea had been mooted that for the present a loan not exceeding £10,000,000 would represent the wiser policy. In these circumstances Mr. Hsiung, whose attitude throughout the negotiations had been reasonable and conciliatory, explained to the representatives of the Group that in the present state of feeling in the country the conditions above set forth must prove entirely unacceptable, and he asked them to refer to their principals a proposal for a £10,000,000 loan freed from such restrictions. The representatives agreed to do so, and on the 9th of July, in reply to their inquiry, they were instructed that the conditions as defined at the Paris Conference could not be varied.

Thereupon Hsiung Hsi Ling withdrew from the negotiations, reserving to his Government the right to enter into other arrangements. At the same time he replied to his critics detailing at length the course of the negotiations and throwing on the provinces the onus of the consequences of the rejection of the Six Nations' terms. The position of the banks was made no less clear. It was stated that they would neither attempt nor did they desire to compel China to conclude a loan with them against her own free will. They hoped that the efforts to raise an internal loan would prove successful and that the people would show sufficient confidence in the Government to raise the money themselves and render their country independent of foreign financial assistance.

Intermittent negotiations through the following weeks failed to remove the *impasse* which was thus created, and it seems probable that no contract will be arrived at with the Six Nations combination on the lines at present proposed, unless the need of China becomes so great that foreign money must be obtained at all costs. In such an event, assuming the six Powers maintained the attitude announced in the House of Commons by Sir Edward Grey, it might become inevitable.

But in the present temper of the country the consequences would probably be very grave. Nor is it at all certain that the end in view would be attained. With all respect to the great bankers on whom devolved the responsibility of setting the course, and the Governments which supported them, the administration of the Salt Gabelle under foreign supervision would present immense difficulties. It would also constitute what would be interpreted in the provinces as a badge of servitude, provocative of endless friction and hostility, which could not but be deleterious to foreign interests. Nor, again, does such a stringent provision appear to be necessary. It is not denied, of course, that it would be a magnificent thing for China if a sister service to the Maritime Customs could be created. Nothing would help on so rapidly the cause of honest administration which is so essential to the country's progress. The adoption of the conditions of the Six Nations Group would also form a fine guarantee against partition. It is an open question, however, as to how far it is right for the foreign Powers to force such a consummation against the people's will, unless it is essential to the proper protection of foreign interests and calculated to avoid foreign intervention. This, however, hardly seems to be the case. Whatever the outcome of the present critical state of affairs, it is difficult to see how investors in China can ultimately be prejudiced. There may be difficulties for a time, but they can scarcely be permanent. The people and the land, the minerals and the railways, the things that constitute a country's wealth, still remain. Whether the Chinese evolve a stable administration or foreign intervention ensues, from the investor's standpoint the result will be much the same. China can be made to meet her present liabilities, and her resources justify their increase within reasonable bounds. As to the question of intervention it would seem that this would hardly be affected by the addition of a further liability of moderate extent. Either China can set her house in order herself or she cannot. If she is sound to the extent of being able to deal with her existing liabilities there can be no reasonable doubt that she would be equal to the further call. If on the other hand the present claims upon her are in fact beyond her power, the end in any case is in sight, and it is

difficult to see how the further burden could materially prejudice the position, for the bulk of the proceeds of any moderate loan must go to discharge the present accumulation of liabilities accrued due.

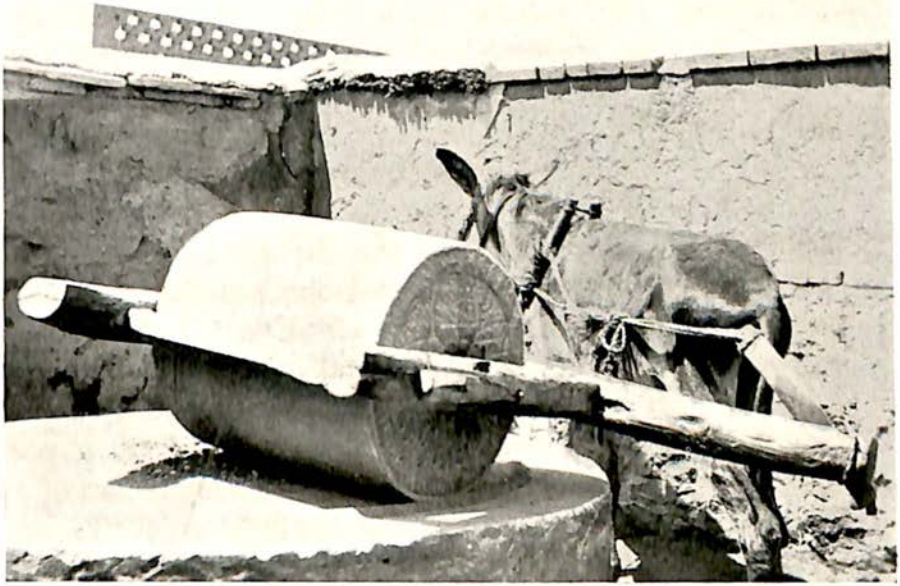
In these circumstances the suggestion is ventured that there is room on the foreign side for modification in the matter of control, at least so far as a loan of say £10,000,000, such as was proposed by Mr. Hsiung, is concerned. On the other hand the Chinese in the provinces, for the Central Government is understanding and not unreasonable, will require also to be yielding in their attitude. At present they only alienate sympathy, and a grave responsibility rests on the leaders of provincial thought, who should direct their efforts to bringing the people to recognise the direction in which the country's best interests lie.

With the matter approached afresh and with both sides in such a frame of mind, there should be abundant room for compromise. That something is necessary in the way of checks, which in certain eventualities can ripen into effective supervision and control, must be admitted in principle by the Chinese. The formation, for example, of a thoroughly well organised Audit Department with wide powers would commend itself to every dispassionate sympathiser with China's legitimate aspirations. On the foreign side it suggests itself that the end to be kept in view should be to rely in greater measure on that growth of public opinion which every day scrutinises more closely the expenditure of public funds, and by assuring publicity and access to accounts to utilise the fierce light of criticism to prevent a recurrence of past scandals.

CHAPTER XXXVII

QUO VADIS?

WHEN a few chapters ago it was written how the Manchus had "exhausted the Mandate of Heaven," and, as far as could be seen, passed as a ruling race from the world's stage for ever, the demand of our title had been fulfilled. An attempt had been made to conjure up an impression of the fundamental conditions of a country which can still provide material for the illustration of many a biblical scene and to suggest something of the characteristics of a race in essentials still a people of primitive methods and simple pleasures. Something had been shown of the operation of modern ideas on the vast fabric of ancient China. The stream of legitimate aspiration towards an improved State had been traced, imperfectly no doubt but perhaps sufficiently to show something of the working of that great law of nature which insists that nations must progress or lose their place. In contradistinction something had been seen of that obstinate blindness to the signs of the times and the wilful neglect of opportunity that characterised the latter days of Manchu rule. Coming to the Revolution itself, it was then, it is hoped, made clear on the one hand how a relatively small handful of men working on a mass by no means unprepared for change succeeded by a combination of courage and good fortune in inaugurating a successful revolt; on the other, how the moral and mental collapse of the Central Government invited disaster and encouraged the country to throw in its lot with the Wuchang cause. Something, too, was shown of the character of Yuan Shih K'ai, the man of strength with the streak of caution, the skilful interpreter of the meaning of events, great patriot or opportunist as time alone can show. Again, on the field of battle the military possi-



A Village Mill.



A Bird-Singing Competition.

. . . . "A people of primitive methods and simple pleasures."

bilities of the race had been displayed, while something had also been shown of a courage which was scarcely suspected and of a mediæval cruelty which modern training has left unchanged. In the later phases the theoretical reasonableness of the Imperialists and the apparent unreason of the Republicans, with their causes, had been described. Nor had the dominant influence of financial considerations been overlooked.* Finally, it had been suggested that the Manchus had not always been the corrupt and tyrannical taskmasters the Republicans averred, and a tribute was permitted to that human sentiment which regrets the passing of old and picturesque things.

It would have been neither possible nor satisfactory, however, to conclude the narrative at such a point. In consequence, the attempt has been made to depict the main difficulties and dangers of six months of Republican government. It is now proposed to add a few final words which, with what has gone before, may offer, it is hoped, some material for an understanding of the present-day problems in China and help to the answer of the question the modern world is asking of that ancient country, Quo vadis?

Happily it forms no part of the historian's duty to project his vision into the future; rather it is to record the story of the past in such a way that it may form a basis for some sort of reasoned speculation. "It is a favourite maxim of mine," wrote Sir John Seeley, "that history, while it should be scientific in its method, should pursue a practical object. That is, it should not merely gratify

* The present writer has endeavoured to confine himself to recording events susceptible of substantiation, especially in the matter of finance. It is perhaps right to mention, however, that the statement has been made in quarters usually well-informed that the Powers would have sanctioned financial assistance being given to Yuan Shih K'ai in December, 1911. Such a course probably would have secured the retention of the Manchus, but it is said not to have been embarked upon through the representations of foreign, and principally British, firms in Shanghai, who feared a "boycott" at Republican instigation. It is more agreeable, however, to believe the policy of foreign Powers to have been dictated by a higher and more dignified statesmanship, such as was indicated in Sir Edward Grey's telegram of December 26, 1911, to Sir John Jordan: "We desire to see a strong and united China under whatever form of government the Chinese people wish" (White Book, No. 1 of 1912, p. 120).

the reader's curiosity about the past, but modify his view of the present and his forecast of the future. Some large conclusion ought to arise out of it."

It is to be feared that no great claim can be made to scientific method, but the idea of a practical object has been kept in mind. The attempt has been made to narrate events as far as possible in such a way as to show their true significance and something of the mental outlook with which they have been so greatly impressed. And now the time has arrived when one must attempt to indicate with what result or, in the language of the author of "The Expansion of England," with what "large conclusion." Is the lesson to be learnt the belief of those extreme believers in the greatness of China's destiny who picture her threatening the annihilation of Europe or the pessimism which sees ahead nothing but chaos, disruption, and decay?

"Westward the course of Empire takes its way," runs the fine line of Bishop Berkeley, which has been quoted with approval by philosophers and is in accordance with history. And though it has been demonstrated by more than one writer that the genius of the Chinese race does not lie in the direction of militarism, it should not be forgotten that the Empire of the future will be mainly sought in the fields of industrialism, in which China has all the materials at hand to enable her in time to lead the world. But much the same forces which are necessary to secure her political existence on a high plane are required to enable her to organise her industrial forces, and the question is, Do they, or how far do they, exist?

The pessimistic school, including in its ranks many life-long observers of Chinese life and politics, can only give to this inquiry a discouraging reply. They see nothing but a vista of troubles eventuating in foreign intervention.

It must be confessed—and the confession is made with sincere regret—that there is much in the history of the past few months to support the correctness of this view. There has been an immaturity about typical Republican aspirations which has displayed a lamentable lack of appreciation either of the conditions of the country or the circumstances of the times. Great schemes have been propounded, showing how little is understood of the true requirements of the situation

or of the necessity of laying sure foundations before commencing to build. Pride of race, an honourable characteristic within just bounds, but sometimes tending to exaggerated proportions in China has retarded that financial accommodation of which the country stood so greatly in need, but little real attempt being made to entertain the terms of the Six Nations Syndicate. Unacceptable as these terms were from a purely national standpoint, they represented the reasoned conclusions of experts and responsible men, besides being conceived in what were thought to be China's best interests, and they were worthy of more serious consideration. By their incontinent rejection the way is apparently paved for a more promiscuous finance, which, if less irksome in its immediate terms to China, and destructive of a disagreeable monopoly, is liable in its possible developments to become infinitely more dangerous. The National Advisory Council in Peking has failed to seize the magnificent opportunity that lay before it, and has fallen into the pitfalls set about its path. At the outset a body representative in the main of Republican sentiment, it was hoped that the Coalition Government which had received the approval of the Nanking Advisory Council would receive its support. But it was not long before the new assembly became split up into many factions. The big revolutionary society—the T'ung Meng Hui—without commanding a majority, was very strongly represented and held advanced views. Exponents of other ideas banded themselves under different denominations, but instead of organising on party lines the members have occupied time in personal dissensions and dangerous intrigues. The old political structure, or much of it, has been destroyed, but virtually no reconstructive work accomplished. Even the election laws, which were to determine the conditions under which the country would secure representation in the Parliament which was to meet in the autumn, have been allowed to be delayed by petty jealousies, leaving no time for the organisation of that delicate electoral machinery so essential to the achievement of the end in view. For the most part side issues in preference to great principles have engrossed the members, who have obstructed the executive and denied assistance to the President in his immensely difficult task.

When, early in July, T'ang Shao Yi resigned the post of Premier,* though the appointment of his successor, Lu Cheng Hsiang,† was confirmed by the Council, the Cabinet Ministers who were also members of the T'ung Meng Hui, with which Mr. T'ang was now identified, resigned in a body, and the greatest difficulty was experienced in filling their places with men who were acceptable to the majority of the National Council.‡ In the meantime, indications were not lacking of separatist tendencies in many of the provinces, where, in June and July, the greatest unrest was reported almost universally to prevail. It was also said that the army had become a law unto itself, the various units, acting independently of each other, interesting themselves in local politics and threatening a military regime. Still more recently Chiang Kuei Ti's troops have mutinied at Tungchow, while finally Mongolia has declared its independence and entered, it is said, into arrangements with Russia which threaten to increase the complications of an already complex situation.

Nevertheless, stormy as the outlook would appear to be, the position is by no means desperate. In the first place, the needs of the great mass of the people—agriculturist, merchant, mechanic—make for peace. They do not really care what form the Government takes so long as they are free to carry on the business of life and avoid being carried into that abyss of want on whose edge the people always

* He had left Peking a few days previously, presumably as a protest against criticisms which had begun to be made in regard to the expenditure of the proceeds of the Belgian Loan, and to avoid being identified with any weakening in the Government financial policy which might follow as a result of the conditions laid down at the Paris Conference.

† *Vide ante*, p. 355.

‡ Ultimately, apparently under pressure, Messrs. Tan Yuan Li, Hsu Shih Yun, Chen Cheng Hsien, Chu Chih Tsen, and Chou Hsueh Hsi, were appointed on the 26th of July to the Ministries of Education, Justice, Agriculture and Forestry, Communications and Finance. The nominee as Minister of Commerce and Industry, Mr. Chang Tso Ping, still failed to secure election. The appointments were sound, especially that of Mr. Chou Hsueh Hsi, a man of outstanding ability and wide official and business experience. He was recently principally concerned on the Chinese side in the important amalgamation of the Chinese Engineering and Mining Company, Limited (British) and the Lanchow Mining Company, Limited (Chinese), operating in the Kaiping coalfield.



NEW CHINA
AND



A PIECE OF OLD.

[NOTE:—The upper picture represents the arrival of the Nanking Delegates at the modern Peking railway station in February, 1912; the lower shows the gate in the Great Wall of China at the Nankow Pass.]

tremble where the margin is narrow and the struggle for life is keen. The more prosperous merchant is with them in sentiment, and is unwilling to have his material comfort disturbed by what, in his native distrust of his fellow-countrymen, he regards as the hallucinations of self-seeking politicians. In some places the members of this section of the community have already combined to police their own neighbourhoods, and in the long run the desire of the masses must assert itself in China as it has done in other countries. In fact, it will do so more easily, for its power of passive resistance is greater and its capacity for organisation, generally speaking, stronger than elsewhere. These same qualities, too, make for an immense vitality and recuperative power, that, given fair opportunity, will rapidly repair the ravages of pestilence, unrest, and war. The year 1912 already seems likely to prove this, with its promise of good crops and reviving trade. Among the politicians, too, there are men of character and ability, the material of which are made statesmen. It is true the National Council has failed. But looking to all the circumstances, it is only what was to be expected, and it should excite sympathy perhaps rather than derision and contempt. There is a tendency for the West to be too harsh in its judgments of China. In its impatience to see a settled China ready for much business it inclines to forget that revolutions must run their normal course. Again, peoples amongst whom representative institutions are part and parcel of life are apt to underestimate the great difficulties of representative government, and an infant deliberative assembly of untried men, unorganised and under no recognised leader, must inevitably prove a rudderless bark on the political sea. It does not follow that the material is bad material, and the closest observers have formed high hopes of many of the men who now occupy the stage. Despite immaturities and even absurdities, something of a spirit of true renascence is abroad. It is certain that great numbers of the leaders realise perfectly well the vastness of the task which lies ahead. They understand the radical differences between the New China, for which they stand, and the Old. They recognise the great gulf fixed between them, and frankly admit that the ideals for which the Republicans have striven

are not to be attained short of many years. And, which is more important, they appreciate the fact that the most essential element in the requirements of progress is sound finance, with its handmaiden, properly organised administration.

Under the Manchus taxes were in effect farmed. Men were appointed to and even paid great sums for positions needing to be maintained in considerable state, but to which were attached merely nominal salaries. From such positions, after a few years, officials were accustomed to retire with substantial competences, the method of administration being to exact that amount in taxes which the people could reasonably be forced to pay and to remit to Peking the minimum sum with which the Central Government would be content. There was nothing dishonest in the practice, for it was the recognised method of compensating Government servants, but it resulted in the wealth of the country going to the enrichment of individuals instead of being available, after payment of proper collection and administration expenses, for reproductive and progressive measures. It is now seen that with a properly organised Civil Service the finances of the country can be placed upon a sounder footing and the resources of the country applied on economic lines. Many men are also deeply impressed with the need of inspiring in the country, and especially in official life, a moral sense in place of the perverted canons of conduct to which ages of characteristically Oriental methods have given rise. Another ground for a more optimistic view is the fact that money has been coming in from the provinces to meet the needs of Government. It has to be admitted, of course, that several of China's foreign financial obligations have remained undischarged during the past few months, but for the moment these need give rise to no great uneasiness; also, though it would seem impossible for China without a foreign loan to tide over the period of administrative reconstruction, it has perhaps done no harm to the country to be forced to rely for a time on its own resources. It has at least afforded to politicians an opportunity of adjusting their sense of proportion. But, in the meantime, it has also resulted in bringing to light the self-

denying qualities of many of the new school, who, in many instances, have given their time and services gratuitously or for something scarcely more than a bare living wage. It is such men who, having sacrificed years of life and opportunity, and often submitted to immense privations, for the sake of that Western education with which they have aimed to equip themselves in the honest belief that they might serve their country, who afford not the least cause for hope. Finally, at the head of all stands Yuan Shih K'ai, experienced, of sound judgment and strong, with his influence with the army, it is believed, despite all that has occurred, scarcely impaired. Recently * news comes of military executions under circumstances evoking the extreme of horror and repulsion. But the sudden blow was typical of Yuan's methods. And the suggestion may be hazarded that when the truth is fully known it will be found that the action was based on State necessity, and betokened the strong man, who will only emerge with enhanced prestige.

Such are the principal forces the resultant of which will answer the question of China's future, and if we could apply Sir John Seeley's method and infer from the history some "large conclusion," we should perhaps be able to do something towards determining its direction. What, then, should be this large conclusion?

The answer would appear to be that, whatever form Chinese administration may in fact have taken, it has always been centralised in idea. From this it will follow that salvation now can only come through a policy of effective centralisation. China lumbering down the ages may be likened to some great mammoth, whose existence is threatened by the smaller and better equipped animals. In the course of nature it would seem she must become extinct, following the fate of the other great customary empires of the past. But though for many years "the sick man of the Far East," she has contrived to prolong existence. Looking on the surface of things this success would appear to be ascribable in the first place to British policy in the early

* The present writer left China on a brief visit to England on the 11th of July last, and has had to rely on correspondence and the Press for details of events occurring between that time and the closing of the narrative, August 28th.

part of the modern phase of foreign intercourse with China, and latterly to the force of international rivalries. But the real cause of her survival must be sought for behind these things. China could never have maintained an equilibrium between the foreign Powers had she not possessed a central Government which exercised, or at least appeared to exercise, an effective control over the huge Chinese dominions. Any process of decentralisation must have involved disintegration. Fortunately for China, despite the strong democratic characteristics of her institutions,* a sure political instinct has prevented the control of local affairs ever reaching a point when it became a danger to the State. To-day conditions at root remain the same. The people in the mass, though wearied by Manchu exactions and, as has been seen, to some extent accustomed to the idea of an improved State, are scarcely changed. They form the same vast population, largely of village communities, which virtually govern themselves and have for centuries been held together by the Imperial idea. With the removal of the force—the sanctions of tradition and veneration—that was conveyed by this idea, what was frequently little more than the shadow of authority must now be replaced by something far more substantial. Thus, by a curious irony, it comes about that the policy which in recent years brought down so much obloquy on the reigning House must now form the Republican road to salvation.

From a Central Government, strong to enforce a policy of wisdom at the expense of sentiment, but yet exposed to the strong light of publicity and criticism, the other things will follow—reforms of administration, finance and law, industrial developments, education, and financial independence.

Viewed in this light the issue becomes tolerably clear. On the one hand, possibly the end of national aspiration in its highest form is involved; on the other, stability and a future of no mean promise.

In the present state of conflicting forces in China it is easier to indicate a right, or at least a possible, way than to foretell whether or how far it will be followed. But if our reasoning is sound, the further conclusion follows that if China is to issue happily from the present troublous

* Cf. *ante*, pp. 3 and 4.

times one of four things, short of the rise of a Chinese Napoleon to upset our calculations, must ensue.

The first possibility is that the National Council will become a National Council in the true sense, and setting national before provincial interests and the needs of the country before personal ambitions, seriously set itself to the vast work of reconstruction, involving most importantly the holding of the country together. Secondly, the Throne might be re-established, and under the re-assertion of the old ideas cohesion be secured, and the country gradually brought to a point of taking real advantage of the benefit of representative institutions. Thirdly, the same desideratum might be secured under the strong arm of Yuan Shih K'ai in the rôle of Dictator or Lord Protector of the Commonwealth, or finally the President might for a time wield the chief power in the State, becoming in effect a Dictator with the support and assistance of the National Council.

Looking at these possibilities in the order in which they are set down, it is to be feared that it is almost too much to expect mature statesmanship, or, what is more important, the highest forms of patriotism, from an assembly such as will presumably come into existence in the course of the next few months. In the first place, it cannot imaginably be representative, and the members will be largely the nominees of provincial wire-pullers. Though there undoubtedly will be a fine leaven of men of character of the type to which reference has been made, it is scarcely probable that they will be in sufficient numbers to justify the hope that they will sway the Council's deliberations and compel disregard of provincial instructions or of intrigue outside the walls of the House. Men only learn by experience, and bitter and heavy though the price has been during this first six months of transition, it has been paid by the people. There are still many politicians who show no sign of being weighed down by any very grave sense of responsibility. Passing on, in the way of re-establishing the Throne there are numerous difficulties. No doubt the Manchus entertain the hope that the Emperor will be recalled from his retirement, but, looking to the history of the Revolution and the state of anti-Manchu sentiment, it would seem a vain

one.* And apart from the Manchu Emperor there seems no other possible candidate for the Dragon Throne. In the earlier stages of the Revolution the descendant of Confucius was spoken of, but he is a man little suited to become a king. Similarly, it was proposed to bring forward descendants of the Mings, but apart from some doubts as to the genuineness of descent, they are less fitted even than the ducal descendant of Confucius to hold the reins in a modern State. It is hinted that Yuan himself might become Emperor, but it would be more in accord with his character to become the "King-maker" of China, should the need arise, than to make a bid himself for the Throne.

Thus we come to the two last possibilities, involving a Dictatorship in some shape or form. On the whole, it is probable that events will produce some such situation. It is not perhaps very likely that Yuan Shih K'ai will proclaim himself Dictator, and it may be taken that the need would require to be great and the path quite clear before he would undertake a Cromwellian rôle. It is true, of course, that events may force such a solution, but before this point is reached it is to be expected that the idea of the chief power of the State continuing to lie in effect with Yuan Shi K'ai, as it undoubtedly does at the present, will be acquiesced in. Short of bringing about another Revolution, the extreme Republicans, faced by the passive demands made by the needs of the mass of the population, the menace of the army, and the determination of Yuan Shih K'ai, will probably have no alternative, and contradictory as it is in terms, such a solution as a temporary measure would hold great promise.

* At the time when every effort was being made to induce the Revolutionaries to accept the idea of the retention of the Manchu Dynasty, various interesting suggestions were made. One was that the youthful Emperor should be virtually separated from kith and kin and receive a modern education at the hands of Chinese, and in due course take in marriage a Chinese wife. The rumour was also industriously circulated, in answer to the idea that the Manchu Emperor represented a foreign yoke, that the Emperor Ch'ien Lung (1736–1796) was a pure Chinese. The child of a Chinese official, ran the legend, born in the Palace precincts, he had been exchanged by the Empress for her own infant daughter in order to provide her lord with an heir. From this it would follow that his descendant Pu Yi (Hsuan Tung) had some Chinese blood in his veins.

"Cæsarism and Republicanism," recently wrote the able Peking correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, "cannot exist side by side." It is an obvious truism: the forces are mutually destructive. But it is by no means clear that something like such a position could not be created in the great country of compromise. On the contrary, it seems more than possible that Cæsarism not only can, but for a time must and will, exist alongside and under the cloak of Republicanism, with results, assuming it be acquiesced in and Yuan lives, that will only be productive of good. Nor would the band of educated enthusiasts who have seized the opportunity of events to overthrow the Manchu power play any inglorious part in such a regime. While there are laws to be made, judicial institutions to be founded and judicial functions to be performed, modern administrative methods to be introduced, a system of sound finance to be inaugurated, industrial schemes to be launched, and a great educational programme to be carried through, there lies ready to hand a great and honourable work. Much has to be done in bringing the country at large to a true appreciation of the change which has been wrought and in fitting the people to perform their part in the scheme of representative institutions. That such a course calls for a high patriotism and self-negation and a trust, almost superhuman many will think, in one man, cannot be denied. But the Revolution, if it has brought forth its place-hunters, has also produced its instances of self-sacrifice. It must also be remembered that there is a limit to the risks which even the greatest of opportunists will run, especially with the moral force of the rest of the world to guard against a breach of faith. Moreover, Yuan Shih K'ai may be, and in the estimation of many is, a great patriot, well equipped to lead the country through the period of change. Could the fact be but firmly grasped, it can scarcely be doubted that China would embark on an era of great promise. There would be good prospect of a sound and gradual progression, utilising what is good in the old and by degrees introducing the new, from which alone permanent results can be achieved. Republicans, if the realisation for a time fell short of those ideals at which in their more optimistic moments they have aimed, might at any rate take comfort from the reflection that a future

was in sight in which improved conditions on practical lines were assured. The country would enjoy the inestimable blessings of peace, industries would develop, and the expansion of trade which to a country is as the breath of life would ensue.

As has been said, the alternative to the evolution of this or some such scheme producing a strong central control seems to be in one shape or another that break-up of China so freely prophesied. Whether it would take the form of a clean split between the North and the South, or the formation of a series of independent kingdoms, cannot be determined. Many Chinese politicians think the latter the more probable solution, with a federation between the States. They argue from the United States of America to a United States of China, ignoring the immense fundamental differences and the admitted evils of the system, which in China would be multiplied. Apart from this, it is hardly conceivable that such a solution could avoid the dangers from outside. Any extreme decentralising process must necessarily be a most hazardous one. Besides making for foreign intervention by individual nations instead of on international lines, it would almost inevitably create opportunities for foreign aggression.

From the point of view of world politics this might ultimately prove the best solution, but it would probably be fatal to Chinese national aspiration.* The belief is entertained, however, that the inherent soundness of the race, which has weathered so many storms, may be relied upon ultimately to realise and follow the wiser way. In the meantime the West may well extend to China a patient and well-informed sympathy, remembering that if, like Pandora, the Revolutionaries have liberated a cloud of troubles, there also fluttered forth from the fateful box the radiant vision of Hope.

* The temptation to speculate on the form foreign intervention would take is great. But space prevents justice being done to the inquiry which would be involved. The hope, however, may be expressed that in such an eventuality, which it is hoped may be far away, intervention would proceed by international co-operation and not on national lines. That the latter might be the case constitutes, of course, one of the gravest dangers to China, besides menacing for the time being the world's peace.

APPENDIX A

THE SHENSI RELIEF EXPEDITION *

THE expedition, consisting of Messrs. A. de C. Sowerby, E. T. Nystrom, J. C. Keyte, E. R. Long, P. D. Evans, W. M. Palmer, H. J. Fairburn, J. H. Denver Jones, and F. W. Warrington, gathered at Taiyuanfu on December 2nd, where an outfit of ten mules and nine ponies, together with a certain amount of tinned stores, bedding, arms, and ammunition, had been got together during the preceding week. Final arrangements were made on December 3rd, and on the following day, December 4th, the party left Taiyuanfu in a south-westerly direction. Fenchowfu was reached on the night of the 6th, and the members of the party had their last little taste of civilisation at the residence of Mr. Pye, who very kindly entertained them. The following day some little difficulty was experienced in crossing a 7,000 ft. pass owing to an unusual amount of snow and ice, which caused many falls both on the part of the men and their animals. The expedition was now heading westward for the Yellow River, which was reached and safely crossed on the fourth day out from Fenchowfu. So far there was not the least sign of unrest, the country being if possible more than usually quiet. This gave the members of the party the opportunity to test their weapons and skill upon the numerous flocks of pheasants that were seen from day to day. Suitehchow was reached on the eighth day out from Taiyuanfu, *i.e.*, December 11th. Here there were undoubted signs of disturbance, and the gates of the city were closed in the faces of certain of the party who had ridden ahead of the rest. The Revs. Watson and

* This account from the pen of the leader of the expedition, Mr. A. de C. Sowerby, appeared in the *Peking and Tientsin Times*.

Comerford, together with Mrs. Watson and two children, here gave the party a warm welcome. It seemed that only three days earlier a large party of the notorious Ko-lao-hui (a socialist society which believes in helping itself to belongings of others) attacked the city, with the avowed intention of looting it, not excepting the missionary quarters. The citizens of Suitehchow put up a gallant defence, and finally drove the Ko-lao-hui back into their fastnesses in the loess hills to the west. Some thirty members of the Ko-lao-hui paid the penalty of their greed with their lives. The heads of two of the leaders hung on the walls outside the west gate of the city.

A day's rest was granted at Suitehchow, after which the whole party pushed on towards Yinanfu, through what would most certainly have been very dangerous country for the Suitehchow missionaries, who were without either arms or an escort. When the relief party arrived these people were just about to attempt this journey alone, and as things turned out would most certainly have been robbed if not murdered. The next large town from Suitehchow had also been attacked by the Ko-lao-hui, but had succeeded in repelling them, killing some twenty of their number.

It was discovered that from this point southward the Ko-lao-hui held everything in their hands, and the party knew not what to expect. During these few days many bands of armed and ruffianly looking men were passed, while armed men were frequently seen watching the road from the tops of the loess hills.

One night Mr. Palmer, who was guarding one of the litters, was left in the rear some distance owing to a breakdown. His little party was accosted by three armed men, who, however, decamped on learning that Mr. Palmer was a foreigner, and seeing his drawn revolver ready for immediate use.

On reaching Yinanfu it was discovered that the Borst Smiths had started for Sianfu the day before. A messenger was sent after them at once. The man, by travelling hard all night, overtook them early on the following morning some 120 li * away from Yinanfu. It was learned that Mr. and Mrs. Borst Smith were travelling with chairs—

* A li is approximately one-third of an English mile.

mules having been unobtainable—and that their chair-bearers were a very unreliable lot. Messrs. Keyte and Palmer at once offered to ride on ahead in order to render them any assistance in case of trouble with the chair-bearers.

At Yinanfu things were in a very shaky condition. The former Chih Fu had been driven out and his place usurped by a miller who could neither read nor write, but who happened to be a leading member of the Ko-lao-hui. This man's authority was in turn being menaced by a second Ko-lao-hui leader who had some troops under his command, and who wanted to loot and burn the city.

It was afterwards learned that these troops, together with all other members of the Ko-lao-Hui in the city, sat up all night preparing to resist an attack which they feared would be made by the relief party.

The latter overtook the Borst Smiths some two days' journey south of Yinanfu and received again a warm welcome. Spare guns brought from Taiyuanfu were given to the missionaries, so that the little fighting force was increased to twelve. Game was plentiful during these days, especially pheasants, which were counted by the hundred feeding along the road-side.

The party was now passing through what was perhaps the most dangerous country. Everywhere the Ko-lao-hui were in possession of the country, and had done a considerable amount of pillaging. News continually came to hand that there was a large force of Ko-lao-hui along the road ahead of the party. So much were these people feared that the military official of Fuchow, a town two days' journey south of Yinanfu, attached himself to the relief party for protection. He asked permission to do this, and was told that he must keep at least 5 li in the rear of the European party. This he failed to do, causing some little annoyance and no little danger to the Europeans by getting his chair, together with some two dozen soldiers, right into the middle of their caravan.

At Lochuanhsien a large body of armed men came out to meet the Europeans. These men looked very suspicious, and caused some little uneasiness by lining up along the road with guns loaded and cocked at unpleasantly suggestive

angles. However, they turned out to be friendly, and only fired a volley into the air by way of a salute.

That night Chungpuhsien, the next day's stopping-place, was looted by the dreaded Ko-lao-hui, who numbered some 600 well-armed men. This formidable band moved southward, and seemed to form a very serious barrier to any further progress southward on the part of the little band of foreigners. The two following days were full of anxiety for the leaders of the relief party. At Chungpu the reported account of looting was verified, and also an account of the sufferings of Dr. and Mrs. Young came to hand. It was at this place that, earlier in the year, they were forced to abandon their mules and escape from the fury of the mob into the surrounding wilderness. Proceeding still southward from Chungpuhsien, the party traversed very wild-looking country. No cultivation was to be seen, the whole of the now somewhat rugged hills being covered with scrub and low timber. About the middle of the day a party of refugees from Sianfu was encountered. The members of this party stated that there were no Ko-lao-hui at Yichünhsien, that day's resting-place, and that the large force that had looted Chungpu lay at a small place well to the west of the main road. This was pleasant news, and the hunting members of the relief party at once indulged in a little deer-stalking, with considerable success. Five deer were shot during the latter half of the day. On nearing Yichün, however, a bugle was heard, and the advance guard of the relief party were surprised to see the walls of the town rapidly manned by an angry and menacing crowd of ruffians. The city gate was closed, and things generally assumed a very grave appearance. A halt was called, and Mr. Sowerby advanced within speaking distance of the town walls, when a brief explanation took place setting everything right. Several armed men came out of the gate and escorted the party safely through the still not too friendly bandits.

It was further discovered that this was the dreaded robber band which had looted Chungpuhsien. They were 400 strong, and in a way very well armed. They had heard the shots fired at deer by the relief party, and had naturally arrived at the conclusion that fighting was taking place.

That night a special watch was kept by the little foreign party, surrounded as it was by this band of lawless robbers, whom it was feared were not to be trusted in spite of what had occurred earlier in the evening.

It was with no little relief that the party pulled out next morning without being molested.

From now on things seemed less dangerous, for though every town and village had been looted, troops from Sianfu were keeping some semblance of order.

Meanwhile the members of the party were keeping in good health in spite of very little sleep. This was largely due to the splendid meals daily engineered by Messrs. Nystrom and Long, who ran the commissariat. Nobody ever went to bed hungry, while the quality of the food and the really fine cooking rendered it easily digested. It commenced to snow on Christmas Eve, so a halt was called and Christmas Day was celebrated. All day long preparations for a big spread were carried on, and finally at 8 p.m. the whole party sat down to an eleven course dinner. Amongst other delicacies were bustard, venison, plum pudding, mince pies, and even anchovies.

Three days later saw the party safely in Sianfu, where the members of the relief expedition were delighted to find a large number of missionaries waiting to be escorted to the coast.

It was very soon discovered that things were not exactly in a very quiet state in Sianfu, and all missionaries were strongly urged to leave. Some, however, for various reasons found it their duty to stay behind.

A meeting was held to discuss by what route the party should attempt to reach the coast, and it was finally decided that, one being as dangerous as another, the shortest (*i.e.*, via Tungkwan and Hinanfu) would be the best.

After a few days spent in preparation for the return journey the party, now swollen to more than double its former size, with numerous Chinese refugees tacked on in the rear, left Sianfu on January 4th. The nine members of the relief party now had to guard a caravan consisting of seven chairs, eighteen carts and mules, and as each of these units travelled at a different speed the caravan was often spread out over a distance of several miles. The male

members of the missions interested helped greatly by guarding their own carts, so that the old plan of front and rear guards was still adhered to. Mr. Nystrom took charge of the rear guard, while Mr. Sowerby was in charge of the advance guard. The journey as far as Tungkwan and on to Shanchow was quite uneventful, except that inn accommodation grew steadily worse, and food more scarce. Daily reports came to hand of fighting at the front, and it seemed as if the party was only following in the wake of a victorious revolutionary army moving steadily eastward.

On leaving Shanchow, Messrs. Sowerby and Nystrom pushed on ahead with the intention of reaching the fighting lines and arranging for a safe passage of the party. To do this it was necessary to ride two days' journey in one. Towards the end of their ride they were suddenly met by the revolutionary army in full retreat, with the shells of the enemy bursting in the air above them. The bulk of the revolutionaries were in an absolute panic, and it was realised that this wild mob tearing along the road would seriously menace the safety of large, unwieldy caravans slowly approaching in the opposite direction. There was nothing for the two Europeans to do but turn their horses about, outstrip the flying rebels, and get the rest of the foreigners and their goods into safety. The race was long and hard, but in the end the foreigners won, and arrived at a village in time to get the whole caravan into one inn, together with all available fodder and food, and mount guard at the door. Scarcely had this been accomplished when the retreating rebels, sullen, savage, and hungry, began to flock past. Many had thrown away their arms, while all were in search of food and shelter. Not finding either in this village (named Miaokou), they very reluctantly continued on towards the next.

It was then learned that the main portion of the rebel army had stopped its retreat, and had taken up a position between Maiokou and the Imperialists. Now was the opportunity, so Mr. Sowerby, this time accompanied by Mr. Keyte, once more stole eastward to interview if possible the generals of the opposing forces. They found the revolutionary Generals Chang, Fang, and Wang (the latter a former robber king) encamped at a village named Hsiahshih.

These men received them kindly, and on being requested agreed to do all they could to help the foreigners into safety. They promised to refrain from fighting the following day, while the two Europeans should ride on and try to get the Imperialist generals to do the same.

That night Wang, the robber king, shared his bed with the two foreigners, making them also partake of some of his supper, which consisted of cornmeal gruel.

Next morning, accompanied by the two Generals Chang and Wang, Keyte and Sowerby commenced the ride between the two opposing lines. They were treated to a sample of what they might expect, when Wang on seeing some men crossing the hill-side, and not knowing who they were, commenced firing upon them. This was the way hostilities were suspended.

The ride through was uneventful, the two Europeans fortunately coming suddenly upon the outposts of the now advancing Imperialist army, were at once recognised and taken to Generals Chao and Chow to explain their mission. They were kindly received, and every facility was granted for the safe passage of the whole party.

The remainder of that day was spent crossing the battle-field of the previous day's fighting. Numerous naked and mutilated corpses were seen, many of which had been beheaded.

The next two days were amongst the most trying of the whole journey, as, owing to the recent fighting and continuous transport of troops, food, fodder, and accommodation were almost impossible to obtain.

Messrs. Sowerby and Evans meanwhile pushed on to Honanfu, and wired to the British Minister. A special train was at once arranged, and when the large caravan drew up to the station everybody was able to go straight on to the train.

Two days later the whole party were safe in Peking.

Thus the undertaking was brought to a successful close.

APPENDIX B

THE PROVISIONAL CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Article I. General Provisions.

1. The Republic of China is established by the People of China.

2. The Sovereignty of the Republic of China is vested in the people.

3. The Territory of the Republic of China consists of twenty-two provinces, Inner Mongolia, Outer Mongolia, Thibet and Kokonor.

4. The Government of the Republic of China shall be composed of the Deliberative Assembly, the Provisional President, the Ministers of State, and the Courts of Justice.

Article II. Citizens.

5. The citizens of the Republic of China shall be equal, irrespective of race, class or religion.

6. The citizens shall enjoy the following rights and liberties:

a. No person shall be arrested, detained, tried or punished without due process of law.

b. No house shall be broken into, or searched without due process of law.

c. Every citizen shall have the right to own property and follow his occupation.

d. Every citizen shall enjoy the liberty of speech, writing, publication, calling meetings and forming societies.

e. Every citizen shall enjoy the right of privacy in correspondence.

f. Every citizen shall have the right to reside, or to remove at pleasure.

g. Every citizen shall enjoy the liberty of religious belief.

7. Citizens shall have the right to petition Provincial Assemblies.

8. Citizens shall have the right to petition the administrative offices.

9. Citizens shall have the right to sue, and to be tried at the Courts of Justice.

10. Citizens shall have the right to appeal to the Administrative Court, when officials of the Government have illegally infringed their rights.

11. Citizens shall have the right to pass government service examinations.

12. Citizens shall have the right to elect and to be elected.

13. Citizens shall pay taxes as prescribed by law.

14. Citizens shall serve in the army as prescribed by law.

15. The rights and liberties of citizens specified in this article may, in the interest of the public, or for the maintenance of order and peace, or in case of any other urgent necessity, be curtailed by due process of law.

Article III. The Deliberative Assembly.

16. The legislative power of the Republic of China shall be vested in the Deliberative Assembly.

17. The Deliberative Assembly shall be constituted by representatives returned from various territories as specified in section 18.

18. Five representatives shall be returned to the Assembly from each province, Inner Mongolia, Outer Mongolia, and Thibet; and one from Kokonor. The method of election shall be left to the decision of the electoral division and members of the Assembly shall be entitled to only one vote in session.

19. The duties and powers of the Deliberative Assembly shall be:

a. To make all laws.

b. To pass the Budget of the Provisional Government.

c. To establish a system of national taxation, currency and uniform weights and measures.

d. To decide the making of public loans and such other agreements as pertain to the National Treasury.

e. To ratify all matters specified in sections 34, 35, and 40.

f. To reply to questions sent by the Provisional Government.

g. To attend to petitions of citizens.

h. To express and present views to the Government regarding law and other matters.

i. To question Ministers of State and demand their presence at the Assembly to give reply.

j. To request the Government to punish officials guilty of receiving bribes, or otherwise acting contrary to law.

k. To impeach the Provisional President, if he be recognised as having acted as a traitor, provided there is a quorum of four-fifths of the whole number of members, of whom two-thirds vote in favour.

l. To impeach any Minister of State, if he be recognised as having failed to carry out his duties, or having acted contrary to law, provided there is a quorum of three-fourths of the whole number of members, of whom two-thirds vote in favour.

20. The Deliberative Assembly shall itself convene the meeting, and decide the opening and closing of the Sessions.

21. All meetings of the Deliberative Assembly shall be public, but may be held in camera, if any Minister of State so request, or the majority of the members so decide.

22. The matters decided by the Deliberative Assembly shall be promulgated and carried out by the Provisional President.

23. If the Provisional President vetoes any Bill passed by the Deliberative Assembly, he shall state his objections within ten days after it shall have been presented to him; and the matter shall be placed before the Assembly for reconsideration. If two-thirds of the members present re-affirm their decision, the same shall be carried out as prescribed by law, in section 22.

24. The Speaker of the Deliberative Assembly shall be elected by ballot and shall be declared elected, if the ballot returns one-half of the total votes cast.

25. The members of the Deliberative Assembly shall bear no responsibility to outsiders for their speeches and decisions made in the Assembly.

26. Except for crimes committed at the time and others involving internal disturbance, or external complication, the members of the Deliberative Assembly shall not be arrested during the session without the consent of the Assembly.

27. The standing rules of the Deliberative Assembly shall be made by the Assembly itself.

28. The Deliberative Assembly shall be dissolved as soon as the National Convention meets which shall succeed to all its rights and powers.

Article IV. The Provisional President and Vice-President.

29. The Provisional President and Vice-President shall be elected by the Deliberative Assembly by a vote of two-thirds of the members at a quorum of three-fourths of the whole number.

30. The Provisional President shall represent the Provisional Government, control political affairs, and promulgate laws.

31. The Provisional President shall execute the laws, and issue and promulgate such orders as are authorised by the law.

32. The Provisional President shall be Commander-in-Chief of the army and navy.

33. The Provisional President shall make all government service rules and regulations, subject to the approval of the Deliberative Assembly.

34. The Provisional President shall have power to appoint and dismiss all civil and military officials, except ambassadors and ministers, whose appointment and dismissal shall be approved by the Deliberative Assembly.

35. The Provisional President shall have power, with the consent of the Deliberative Assembly, to declare war, conclude peace, and make treaties.

36. The Provisional President shall have power to declare martial law as authorised by the law.

37. The Provisional President, as the Representative of the whole nation, shall receive foreign ambassadors and other public ministers.

38. The Provisional President shall have power to recommend measures to the Deliberative Assembly for consideration.

39. The Provisional President shall have power to confer decorations and other honorary bestowals.

40. The Provisional President shall have power to grant general amnesty, special amnesty, commutation and rehabilitation; but the granting of a general amnesty shall have the approval of the Deliberative Assembly.

41. In case of the impeachment of the Provisional President by the Deliberative Assembly, the judges of the highest court of justice shall elect nine judges to constitute a special tribunal for that purpose.

42. The Provisional Vice-President shall act for the Provisional President, in case he resigns, or is otherwise unable to attend to his duties.

Article V. Ministers of State.

43. The Prime Minister and the Ministers of the Departmental Boards shall be called the Ministers of State.

44. The Ministers of State shall assist the Provisional President and share his responsibility.

45. The Ministers of State shall countersign all bills proposed, laws promulgated and orders issued by the Provisional President.

46. The Ministers of State and their deputies shall have the privilege to attend and speak in the Assembly.

47. A Minister of State on impeachment by the Deliberative Assembly shall be removed from office by the Provisional President, but at the request of the Provisional President, the case may be reconsidered by the Assembly.

Article VI. The Courts of Justice.

48. The Courts of Justice shall consist of judges appointed by the Provisional President and the Minister of Justice.

The organisation of the courts and the qualification of the judges shall be prescribed by law.

49. The Courts of Justice, as authorised by the law, shall have power to try all civil and criminal cases, except those involving administrative matters and of a special nature which shall be tried by a different procedure.

50. All trials of the Courts of Justice shall be open to the public, except those affecting peace and order which shall be tried in secret session.

51. Judges, in the discharge of their duties, shall be independent and not be interfered with by their superiors.

52. During tenure of office, the compensation of judges shall not be diminished, or their services transferred; and except when in conformity with the law, they deserve punishment, or retirement from office, they shall not be removed. Regulations for the removal of judges shall be prescribed by a special law.

Article VII. Supplementary Provisions.

53. Within ten months after the promulgation of the present Constitution, the Provisional President shall call the National Assembly, whose organisation and method of election shall be decided by the Deliberative Assembly.

54. The Constitution of the Republic of China shall be drawn up by the National Assembly, and until it takes effect, the Provisional Constitution shall have the same force as the aforesaid Constitution.

55. The present Constitution may be amended by a vote of two-thirds of the members of the Assembly, or on the recommendation of the Provisional President with the approval of three-fourths of the members out of a quorum of four-fifths of the number present.

56. The present Constitution shall take effect from the date of its promulgation and all enactments heretofore passed for the organisation of the Provisional Government shall from the said date become null and void.

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